

GATES V. AMERICA
IS HE GETTING TOO BIG
FOR HIS BOOTS?



STEPHEN GOODWIN
THE END OF MY
EVEREST DREAM?



PHIL HAMMOND
MY NIGHT OF SHAME
WITH PAUL MERTON

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THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Tuesday 12 May 1998 45p (IR 50p) No 3,608

Blair: 'We did nothing wrong'

By Fran Abrams and
Andrew Buncombe

Backing for FO as new evidence emerges of contacts with mercenaries

TONY BLAIR yesterday backed the diplomat alleged to have helped organise the overthrow of the Sierra Leone regime with the support of mercenaries.

The Prime Minister said that while sanctions should never be broken, Peter Penfold, the High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, had "done a superb job".

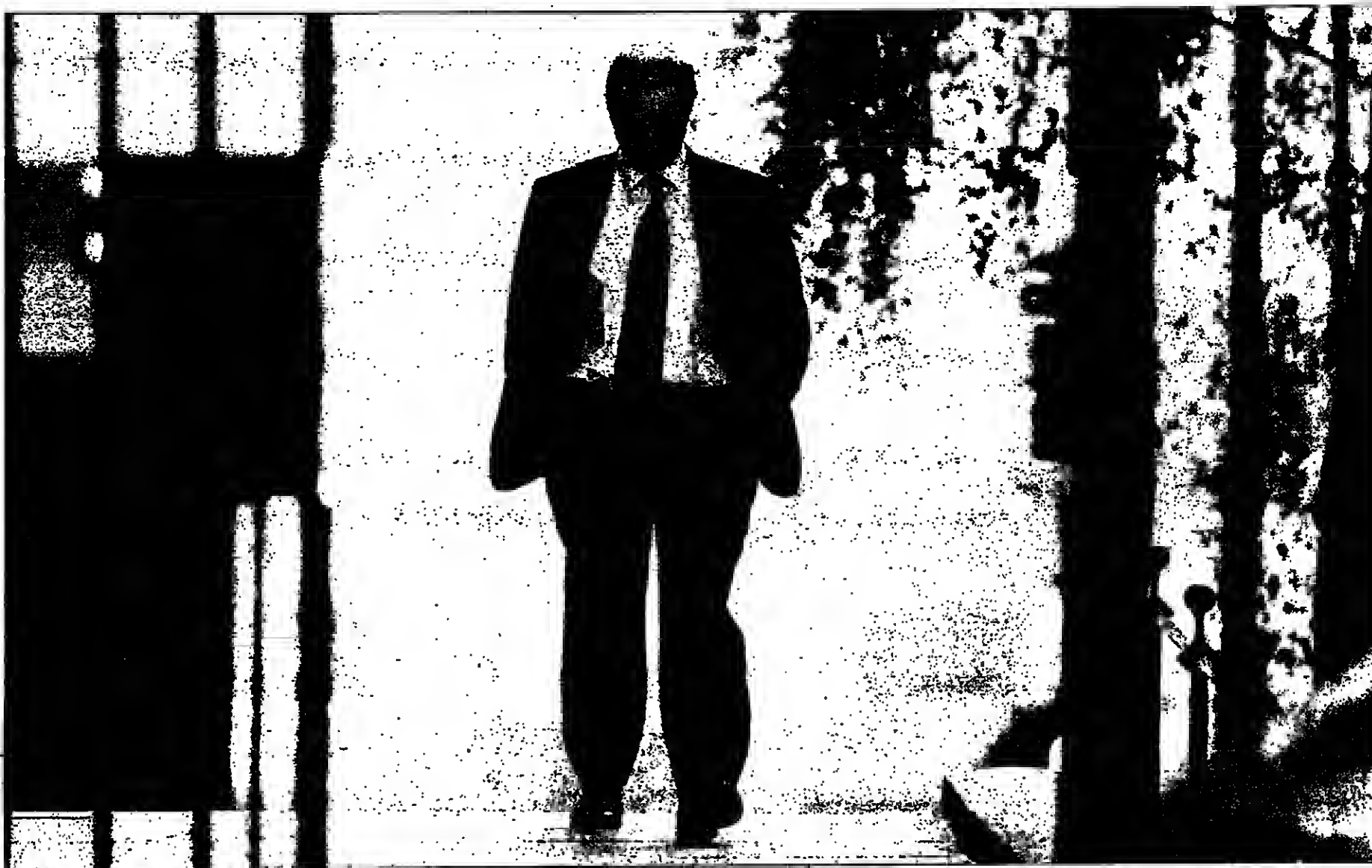
Mr Blair's backing of his diplomat, seen as a softening of the Government's line on the "Arms to Africa" crisis, came as more details emerged over the role of Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd in the operation to restore elected president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

The Independent has learnt that key members of a network linked to the mercenaries were invited to a conference organised by the Foreign Office at which Mr Lloyd was a guest speaker. At the conference, held to discuss the restoration of deposed President Kabbah, Mr Lloyd said: "The message to [the rebels] and let me make this absolutely clear, must be to get out while the possibility of doing so peacefully still remains."

Mr Lloyd has insisted he was not aware that the plan to restore President Kabbah involved Sandline, the "military consultants" headed by the former British army officer Lt-Col Tim Spicer. However, many people at the conference were aware that President Kabbah and his exiled government were negotiating with Sandline to provide weapons and training.

Among these individuals was Rupert Bowen, a former diplomat currently employed by Branch Energy, a mining company partly owned by Tony Buckingham, which shares a London address with Sandline.

Mr Bowen, the former first secretary to Namibia, is considered a key member of the Sandline network and sources say he is an important figure in introducing the company to new foreign governments. Robert Brown,



Robin Cook deep in thought as he walks along Downing Street for a meeting with the Prime Minister yesterday as the row over arms to Sierra Leone raged Photograph: AP

another Branch Energy employee, was also at the conference.

Also present was John Hirsch, the US ambassador to Sierra Leone. Last week, Sandline said it had regularly briefed him on its operation. In addition to President Kabbah,

members of his exiled government who arranged the deal with Sandline, were also present.

Mr Blair yesterday described the growing political row over Sandline's shipment of arms to Sierra Leone in apparent breach of UN and EU sanc-

tions as a "hoo-ha". He said: "Let's not forget that both the UN and the UK were trying to help the democratically elected regime to restore its position from an illegal military coup."

"It was a democratically elected

regime that people were trying to help. They were quite right in trying to do it."

"Nobody should ever act in breach of a UN arms embargo but Mr Penfold did a superb job last year in dealing with the consequences of

the May coup," he said. "That is the background and people can see that a lot of the hoo-ha is overblown."

William Hague, the Conservative leader, said the comments were "a sign of the panic which is gripping the Government". And he went on:

"His comments not only undermine the Customs and Excise investigation into allegations of criminal misconduct but also contradict the Foreign Secretary's statements to date."

"The confusion over the Government's position has deepened and we still don't know whether ministers are telling the full story."

Later, in the House of Lords, the Foreign Office minister Baroness Symons suggested that arms shipments to the exiled Sierra Leone government were illegal whether or not they were shipped directly to the country.

"As I understand it, the Sierra Leone UN sanctions order prohibited sale or supply of arms... for the purpose of delivery directly or indirectly or to the order of a person connected with Sierra Leone," she said.

The Independent understands that four shipments of up to 120 tonnes of arms were sent to President Kabbah in Conakry, Guinea, and in Freetown.

The conference was held in October at the Royal Overseas League, a private club in central London. Among topics for discussion was the planned imposition of sanctions against the rebel regime, headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma.

The conference programme outlined: "The coup has had serious negative consequences for the country and the livelihood of its citizens. It has regrettably reversed the gains in economic and social reforms, disrupted economic activities and weakened investor and business confidence."

The conference outlined the programmes that the Kabbah government would implement within its first 90 days of its restoration and the need for an international peace-keeping force. But exactly how Mr Kabbah was to be restored to power was less explicit. "Everyone knew this was a sensitive issue," said one delegate who attended. "It was something that was whispered about around the edges rather than something that was said in the open."

India explodes three nuclear bombs

By Steve Crawshaw

INDIA yesterday defied world opinion and stoked regional tensions by conducting three underground nuclear explosions - the first for 24 years. The news of the explosions stoked tensions with neighbouring Pakistan, which has fought three wars with India in the past 50 years.

Pakistan accused India of sucking it into "a nuclear arms race". The Pakistani foreign minister, Gohar Ayub Khan, called for international condemnation and sanctions: "They are more or less trying to say 'to hell with you'."

US officials declared themselves "stunned" by the news, and talked of possible sanctions.

Britain and the European Union seemed more hesitant and confused. After five hours of "no comment", Britain last night issued a statement on behalf of the European Union which talked of European "dismay". Both India and Pakistan have refused to sign up for the international ban on nuclear testing which was agreed by 149 countries in 1996. Yesterday's test included a thermonuclear device, far more sophisticated than the fission device included in India's previous nuclear test in 1974.

When the new Indian government, led by the nationalist BJP party, took over in March, it emphasised that it intended to "exercise the option" to introduce nuclear weapons.

Praful Bidwai, an independent weapons policy analyst who has campaigned for India to abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons, said a thermonuclear device was a sign that India's programme has progressed considerably since it tested a simpler fission device in 1974, and warned: "China and Pakistan will regard us as a full-fledged nuclear adversary and so we will have two nuclear arms races - a small one with Pakistan and a big one with China."

Suzanna van Moyleand, an analyst with Veritec, an independent arms control verification group, described the explosions as "a negative landmark".

Nuclear weapons a world issue again, page 10

Rail companies are fined £4m over late trains

By Louise Jury

RAIL companies have been fined £4m for running trains which were late or with too few carriages, according to figures published yesterday. The latest Office of Passenger Rail Franchising bulletin showed punctuality worsened on 35 routes and improved on only 17 in the past 12 months.

John O'Brien, the franchising director, warned train operators that some needed to "dramatically improve" their punctuality and reliability figures, which were "unsatisfactory" and had declined since last year. "Passengers have a right to expect performance to improve year-on-year. Instead, punctuality generally, although

still better than in 1995/96, has slipped back from the improvements achieved during 1996/97 - I now urge the industry to... bring about sustained improvement... across the whole network."

The worst performers on punctuality were Virgin's West Coast services in Scotland, where 69.5 per cent of services were on time, although the company's much-criticised English operations improved.

Also singled out for running too many late trains were Great Western and Thames. Some of the blame was laid at the door of Railtrack, which instituted speed restrictions while repairing track.

A Great Western spokeswoman said: "There have been

exceptional problems which have contributed to a worsening of our performance, including an unusually high number of speed restrictions - 40 - imposed by Railtrack."

Keith Bill, of the Save Our Railways campaign, said many parts of the country were reaching a crisis. "If Tony Blair and John Prescott do not step in with some tough radical measures which will turn this right around, it won't be long before passengers vent their fury on New Labour and not the last administration," John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, who is in charge of transport, said it was unacceptable that in many cases the performance of train operators still continued to be worse than last year.

Ministers tell sunscreen makers to cut their prices

By Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

SUNCREAM manufacturers and retailers should cut the cost of sun lotions to make sure that people protect themselves from skin cancer, the Government said yesterday.



After the hottest weekend of the year so far, Nigel Griffiths, the consumer affairs minister, stressed that sun lotions must not be seen as fashion products and should be available at the lowest possible prices.

Mr Griffiths said he had written to manufacturers and retailers, urging them to take all practical steps to bring down the price. He has urged them to follow the example of the Co-op supermarket chain, which announced two weeks ago that it was cutting the price of Britain's

top brand sun protection creams and lotions - including Ambre Solaire, Nivea and Piz Buin.

A Co-op spokesman said sun lotions and creams would be reduced to cost price until the end of the summer to encourage consumers to protect themselves. So while, for example, a bottle of Piz Buin Sun Lotion 25 200ml usually sells at £12.29, it is available for £6.39 all summer at the Co-op.

The Labour MP Fraser Kemp - whose wife Pat suffered

skin cancer after playing as a child without any sun protection - welcomed the move. "Clothing and creams are the only protection against the dangers of the sun," he said. "There desperately needs to be a cut in prices because sun creams at the moment are just too expensive for some families to afford."

A spokesman for Cancer Research said there was a long way to go in persuading some people to alter their sunbathing habits to reduce the risks. He

added: "Anything which encourages people to protect themselves for the lowest possible price is to be applauded."

Weathermen yesterday predicted that the first hot spell of 1998 will continue for the next few days. Temperatures in many parts of the UK eclipsed those in Nice, or the Canaries, as seaside resorts reported a busy weekend. The highest temperature was recorded on Saturday in Norfolk and in south London where it reached 25C (77F).

Today's news

Everest blow

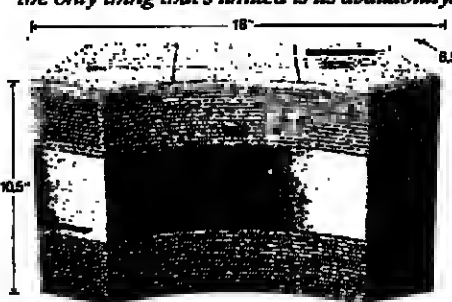
FEROCIOUS winds whipping down Everest's Western Cwm have destroyed the advanced base camp where Stephen Goodwin and his team are staying. Page 3

'Yes' campaign

A NUMBER of initiatives are being planned to boost the "Yes" campaign for the referendums in Ireland amid concerns that the Protestant community has yet to swing decisively in favour of the Ulster agreement. Page 6

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Ferocious winds are howling; our base camp is destroyed. Will this be farewell to Everest?



STEPHEN GOODWIN

Everest Diary

Base Camp

THERE WAS a sound like the roar of a fleet of 747 jets overhead as great plumes of snow and vapour flew from the west shoulder of Everest.

Ferocious winds whipped down Everest's Western Cwm last night and this morning, demolishing nearly all our Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions tents and many of those of other teams. Our advanced base camp has been destroyed.

Fortunately no lives have been reported lost, though for a while we feared one of our Sherpas had suffered a frostbitten hand as two of them battled through the Cwm.

The scene at Base Camp around breakfast was reminiscent of photographs of wives at pithead gates after mining disasters. Groups of Sherpas and climbers clustered near their mess tents gazing up towards the head of the Khumbu Icefall and the entrance to the Cwm.

Out of the Cwm itself, snow billowed in whirlwinds, snaking down the upper icefield.

Our own camp was unoccupied - but with the likelihood of vital equipment scattered by the wind, a question mark hangs over any summit bid.

Gear, missing or otherwise, was out our first thought this morning. Nima Dorjee and Pemba Tsering, two of our most experienced Sherpas, left before dawn with a colleague, "Big" Dorjee, from an American team to try and reach Camp 2 to assess storm damage. They were somewhere in the maelstrom of blowing snow we could see hundreds of metres above us.

In addition, a handful of Sherpas based at Camp 2 for others in the international circus of teams were hanging on in a large dome tent, trying to keep it from collapsing despite two hiroko poles.

Strangely, though the mouth of the Cwm is only 600 metres above Base Camp, we stood watching in relative calm and sunshine. However, there was no mistaking the menace of the wind's roar and the concern of the Sherpas, who on any other slack morning would have turned to playing cards and laughter.

The timing of the blast is sobering. It is pretty well two years to the day since nine climbers died when similar fierce winds caught them out above the South Col.

As the sunshine gave way to steady snowfall, most of the day was spent criss-crossing between camps



Winds whipping snow off the upper reaches of Everest during the storm. Below: Nima Temba trying to make contact with Camp 2. Photographs: Stephen Goodwin and Jim Williams, using Fuji DS-300 digital cameras

of different nationalities piecing together information. Shyam Prasad Pun, Camp 2 cook with the US team of disabled climber Tom Whittaker, had watched sleeping bags and bits of tents hurtling down the Cwm, some of them maybe our own.

Tents belonging to the Iranian team also took to the air like magic carpets - unbeknown to their owners who, tired of hanging around Base Camp for a weather window, have gone down the valley to Namche for a rest.

Nima and Pemba reached Camp 2 at about 11am, did what they could to secure the wreckage and then set off back. It was a vain effort. In white-out conditions and unable to see their way in the heavily crevassed Cwm

they were forced to turn back and take refuge with Shyam and the others in Whittaker's battered dome tent. With only patchy radio contact, it was feared for a while that Nima had a frost-bitten hand. Later, after apparently plunging his hands in warm water, we heard he had regained the use of his hand, but only time will reveal the extent of his injury.

Their damage report on the camp was less encouraging: the cook tent had been blown away, three of the five team-member tents were flattened with gear still inside them and the other two are missing, as are all three tents used by the Sherpas.

Until we know what has been lost and what can be salvaged, it is im-

possible to know whether we are still able to mount a summit bid if the weather improves. All our down-jackets, salopettes, and other high-altitude gear was in the tents.

As for the effect of the wild weather on our higher camps, with luck our four tents at Camp 3 at 7,200m on the Lhotse Face will have been buried by snow and can simply be dug out. The one tent that our Sherpas erected at the South Col could well be history, though the oxygen bottles and other gear should still be retrievable.

With a bit of luck, the wind will have eased sufficiently tomorrow for Sherpas, and possibly some team members, to go up the Icefall and go into the Cwm to start the salvage op-

eration. It is expected to be a combined effort by most of the international teams here - the disaster having hit everyone.

Meanwhile in Base Camp, climbers will again be engaged in the frustrating business of trying to interpret weather forecasts and guess the movement of the jet stream, at the moment blowing directly over Everest.

It is a change in the track of these high-altitude winds that creates the calmer weather window climbers try to exploit each spring. But over the past week we have watched plumes of cloud rushing across the mountain tops at speeds of up to 100mph, and more are forecast.

David Callaway, our New York



A full collection of Stephen Goodwin's Everest diaries, with photographs can be found on The Independent's web site - www.independent.co.uk

'Voice of Swimming' sacked over bribes

By Linus Gregoriadis

HAMILTON Bland, the so-called "Voice of Swimming", was sacked by both the BBC and the Amateur Swimming Association yesterday for bringing the sport into disrepute after an inquiry found he had taken bribes from pool manufacturers.

Mr Bland, the swimming body's facilities consultant, took "secret commissions" from manufacturers while giving advice to councils about new pools, according to an inde-

pendent inquiry carried out by solicitors' firm, Herbert Smith.

David Sparkes, the ASA's chief executive, said yesterday that the findings of the report would be handed over to the police.

He said: "As ASA facilities consultant, Hamilton Bland was in a position of trust and influence, a position which he has clearly abused. Mr Bland has betrayed the trust that both we and our partners put in him. We had no alternative but to relieve him of all duties with the ASA."

"There is no doubt that as a direct result of Mr Bland's activities the ASA's reputation has suffered, particularly with local authorities and the Sports Council. Clearly there are some bridges to be built and we are working towards restoring confidence in the ASA."

The report was ordered by the ASA last July after investigations by *World in Action* and a national newspaper showed that the former Olympic coach had made a fortune from the sport.

The BBC, who have used Mr Bland as a commentator since 1975, said in a statement yesterday that it would be "inappropriate" to continue to employ him.

Mr Bland, who lives in a mansion in Warwickshire, reached an agreement with Han Mooyar, the owner of a company called Poly Pool Floors Limited (PPF) specialising in moveable floors for swimming pools, according to the inquiry.

The report concludes: "There is no difference in law between a secret commission and a bribe. The evidence is incontrovertible, therefore, that Mr Bland took a number of bribes from Mr Mooyar in exchange for promoting or recommending PPF's floors."

The inquiry, carried out by Mark Gay, a partner at the law firm who specialised in sport, cleared Mr Bland of any wrongdoing in his roles as promoter of the ASA awards, and as



Hamilton Bland, 'the voice of swimming', with a group of young enthusiasts. Photograph: Birmingham Post

head of his company SwimGB. In a statement yesterday, Hamilton Bland said: "I absolutely deny that I have brought the ASA or myself into disrepute."

A copy of the report has also been sent to Chris Smith, the Culture, Media and Sport Secretary, who has already said that he would pass the report to the police if it contained evidence of illegal behaviour.

Mr Bland gave evidence to Mr Gay's inquiry in February after he suffered a brain haemorrhage at the end of last year.

Mr Sparkes said that the ASA had acted on the report's recommendation that the position of ASA facilities officer

should be advertised as a full-time position, funded by the English Sports Council.

The independent inquiry said: "Mr Gay investigated allegations made in the *World in Action* programme that Mr Bland acted in conflict of interest in advising lottery applications, while at the same time he was advising the ASA as to what priority should be accorded to projects by the ASA as part of the sports governing body consultation exercise."

"Mr Gay found that Mr Bland had at no time acted for the English Sports Council and at no time accorded an ASA priority to any project on which he was instructed."

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Trapped cat burglar admits Picasso plot



Scott, who claimed in court that he had retired from crime 10 years ago to become a celebrity tennis coach

By Louise Jury

A CELEBRATED cat burglar who claimed to have renounced his life of crime yesterday admitted his role in a plot to sell a stolen £650,000 Picasso.

As a jury at Stainesbrook Crown Court in east London was about to retire to consider its verdict, Peter Scott, 67, changed his plea to guilty to conspiring to handle the painting, *Tête de Femme*, stolen in a daring raid at gunpoint on a gallery last year.

Scott was granted bail until sentencing by Judge Andrew Brooks who warned him: "This is an extremely grave and serious matter which attracts a substantial term of imprisonment." Speaking outside the court after yesterday's five-minute hearing, Scott said that he was a "victim of circumstance".

Scott was the author of a book, *Gentleman Thief - Recollections of a Cat Burglar*, which recounted his 30-year career of thefts from stars including Sophia Loren and Elizabeth



Picasso's *Tête de Femme*, stolen at gunpoint in London last year

However, Ronald Spring, who earlier admitted handling the Picasso and agreed to give evidence against Scott, said that Scott had handed him a suitcase containing the stolen painting on the evening of the raid and demanded money. Spring, a former legal executive who is also awaiting sentencing, said: "He told me he wanted between £70,000 and £75,000 within seven days."

Scott was then caught in a sting operation by undercover detectives a week after the theft. Officers moved in to arrest him as he walked away from a rendezvous with Spring at the Sherlock Holmes Hotel in London's Baker Street. Although he told the court he was not interested in any money from the deal, he was holding a plastic carrier bag of cash and smiling to himself.

After the hearing, Scott said the weight of evidence against him had forced him to change his plea. "I was intellectually and morally convinced that after the prosecution's very skillful cross-examination, I could not continue to sustain this not guilty plea without jeopardising my 10 years of honesty, decency and hard work."

Detective Constable Andrew Kennedy, of the National Crime Squad, said he thought that Scott was driven by publicity. "I think he revels in infamy. He's a likeable rogue, but having said that he is still someone who has committed a series of very serious crimes throughout his life."

Taylor. But during the five-day court hearing, he insisted he had "retired" from crime 10 years ago to become a celebrity tennis coach.

He claimed he had been an innocent go-between in a private deal arranged by Ronald Spring, a 70-year-old business accomplice, and another friend who was the man who robbed the Lefevre Gallery in Mayfair in March last year.

Scott changed his original not guilty plea after the jury heard that he met the robber, who cannot be named for legal reasons, shortly after the raid and passed the work to Ronald Spring.

He had earlier told the court that he had known the raider for a number of years and regarded him as a "surrogate son". He said that anything he had done had been out of loyalty.

Five summoned to appear before Lawrence inquiry

THE five men named in connection with the murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence have been issued with summonses ordering them to attend the public inquiry being held into his death, a spokesman for the inquiry said. "There has been no indication that they will not attend," he added.

Michael Holmes, the lawyer for one of the five, Gary Dobson, 22, said he would attend the hearing. "If he gets a summons he has no option. If he did not he would be in contempt," Mr Dobson said. Neil Acourt, also 22, and Luke Knight, 20, were cleared of Stephen's murder at the Old Bailey in 1996 after a private prosecution brought by the Lawrence family collapsed. David Norris and Jamie Acourt, both 21, were charged with the killing but the cases were thrown out at committal stage.

The documents order the five men to appear at the tribunal in south London on 8 June, but the inquiry spokesman said this was the earliest date at which they could be required. Failure to attend or give evidence could lead to a witness being jailed for up to six months and fined up to £1,000.

Driver 'fine' after lorry terror

A POLICE report on the motorway incident in which a lorry driver guided his vehicle through traffic at 70mph after the accelerator jammed was submitted to the Department of Transport's Vehicle Inspectorate yesterday.

Five police cars and a helicopter cleared the route ahead after the driver, Michael Rayner, 26, alerted them to his predicament by mobile phone at about 11am on Sunday. Mr Rayner escaped unhurt after bringing the vehicle to halt by switching off the engine and steering into a crash barrier on the M1 just outside London.

The Scania P124 lorry, registered in January 1998, was contracted to waste management firm Polkacrest of Wrotham, Kent. A company spokesman said: "Everyone is relieved that what could have been a nasty incident ended safely. Mr Rayner is fine, but totally overwhelmed by all the interest in the story. He has gone away for a couple of days to recuperate."

'Misogynist' council claim

A COUNCIL solicitor was groped by a senior official after he had too much to drink, it was claimed at an industrial tribunal in north London yesterday.

Amanda Kelly, 41, said the man - who cannot be named for legal reasons - accosted her at a hotel where a meeting was being held for the directors of Camden Council, north London. She said she complained after the incident in July 1994, but was sworn to secrecy by the then chief of personnel. Ms Kelly, now the council's deputy chief executive, is claiming sexual discrimination against the chief executive, Steve Bundred, 46. She says the council had a "misogynistic" atmosphere. The council and Mr Bundred deny the allegations. The hearing continues today.

BA seeks to foil easyJet

BRITISH Airways yesterday moved to block a court action by low-cost airline easyJet which opposes BA's entry into the no-frills European market. EasyJet, operating out of Luton airport, has issued High Court proceedings seeking injunctions to prevent BA "illegally cross-subsidising" its new low-fare subsidiary, Go, which plans to start services later this month from Stansted. But BA has asked a Commercial Court judge to "strike out" easyJet's claim as "unsustainable in law and disclosing no cause of action". The hearing is expected to last three days.

Doctor on murder charge

THE hospital anaesthetist, Thomas Shanks, 47, was remanded in custody when he appeared in court yesterday charged with the murder of Vicky Fletcher. The doctor is accused of killing the 21-year-old nurse outside a public house, in Castleford, West Yorkshire, last Thursday night.

The best help for students

The Independent is the top source of information about university course places, according to a Universities and Colleges Admissions Service survey of undergraduates. Sixty-three per cent of applicants used the listings published in the paper.



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Detective's sex session 'captured on tape'

By Steve Boggan

A DETECTIVE who has been suspended on full pay for more than three years was taped by colleagues allegedly having sex with a police witness without her consent.

The Independent has obtained a transcript of the officer apparently having sex with the woman, in which she says "oo" or rejects his advances on 17 occasions.

The transcript forms part of an investigation into 34 allegations made against the former South East Regional Crime Squad officer by the witness, most seriously that he repeatedly had unlawful sexual intercourse with her between May 1993 and August 1994 at two "safe houses" in Essex.

As The Independent reported two weeks ago, the officer has been receiving a salary of about £30,000 a year since his suspension in late 1994, but no decision has yet been taken by the Metropolitan Police on whether he should be disciplined.

In a statement given by the witness to Scotland Yard's Complaints Investigative Bureau in September 1994, she details the growth of a highly unprofessional relationship which started with the detective's involvement in the arrest of drug suspects linked to her, and progressed into him having sex with her, allegedly sharing her reward money and even allegedly supplying her with drugs.

The Crown Prosecution Service regarded the woman, a former drug addict, as too unreliable a witness to allow criminal proceedings against the officer. It is understood the Police Complaints Authority made

a recommendation as to his future a year ago, but he has remained suspended on full pay.

Other allegations being investigated by the CIB are that the officer "dishonestly appropriated 4 kilos of heroin from a total quantity of 40 kilos that were seized"; that in March 1994, he "unlawfully supplied the complainant with a firearm and a case of bullets"; and that he "unlawfully supplied the complainant with dangerous drugs", cannabis, LSD and ecstasy.

The witness also claims the officer stole money from her, told her what to say in a witness statement in a bid to pervert the course of justice, tapped her phone, dishonestly hooded £25,000 and failed to act on information about other crimes.

In her statement, the witness, a mother of two, indicates that sex with the married officer took place many times, but by the time their relationship ended, she said she no longer wanted to have sex with him.

Before the last session was recorded, she appears to have been primed to use key words. For example, in one instance, she says: "I don't want sex. [Officer's name] you're penetrating me." He replies: "That's it, yeah." Again, apparently for the benefit of the microphones, she says: "[Name] you're pulling my drawers down ... why, I don't want it. Please put them back on." He replies: "No."

The tape's value as a piece of criminal evidence is debatable as it features a woman who has consented to be recorded in advance of supposedly being forced to have sex. However, as a piece of evidence for disciplinary purposes, it may be potentially valuable.

Mother battles the blight of Millennium Dome building work

By Clare Garner



Reprieved: Carolynne Rushton with her daughter Bertha (above) can stay in their cottage until the appeal

Photograph: Andrew Burman

MANY people hate the Millennium Dome but Carolynne Rushton has more reason than most. Since building work began, she has been condemned to live in a contaminated dust bath, with rats in the garden and drilling at dawn. While her neighbours have been rehoused, she claims she has not been offered suitable alternative accommodation.

"Look at that dome causing all this trouble. All the muck and all the noise," Ms Rushton said, trying to soothe her 22-month-old daughter, Bertha. Six months pregnant with her second child, Ms Rushton, 33, a single mother, is at her wits end "struggling to keep it together".

Yesterday she made a successful plea at the Court of Appeal against a possession order which would have left her homeless. She has been given security to stay in the 19th-century gas worker's cottage overlooking the dome development in Greenwich, south-east London, until the appeal is heard.

A spokesman for Loodoo and Quadrant Housing Trust, which until recently leased the house from English Partnerships, said they had offered Ms Rushton other homes and the local council had agreed to rehouse her, but that she had declined to contact the council and refused their offers.

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Ministers act to cut school exclusions

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

MINISTERS yesterday promised to stop schools excluding too many pupils as they produced a new report showing big variations in exclusion rates.

Just one-quarter of secondary schools are responsible for two-thirds of permanent exclusions and one-quarter do not exclude any pupils. Last year, the exclusion rate in Hammersmith and Fulham, in west London, was four times that of Newham in east London and more than six times that of Oxfordshire.

The report from the Prime Minister's Social Exclusion Unit wants to reduce exclusions by encouraging schools to intervene earlier to cope with unruly pupils. It says:

■ inspectors should be sent in to schools which exclude the most pupils.

■ league tables should show how many pupils each secondary school excludes permanently.

■ schools should introduce "sanctuaries" where disruptive pupils can cool off.

The report says that some pupils are being excluded for wearing nose studs or trousers not bought from an approved supplier. There is anecdotal evidence that schools are excluding difficult children so poor results do not affect their position in examination league tables.

Exclusions have risen four-

fold since 1990. Last year about 13,000 pupils were permanently excluded. The report also aims to cut truancy from the Government's estimated figure of one million children each year - out of around 7.5 million pupils.

Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, said: "By reducing the levels of truancy and school exclusions we will effectively cut off one of the main supply routes to welfare dependency, joblessness and criminal behaviour."

For the first time, pupils who are permanently excluded will have the right to full-time education either in a "sin-bin" or pupil referral unit or at another school. Some receive only three or four hours tuition a week.

David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education, is hoping to receive money for the changes from the Government's comprehensive spending review due to report in July so that they can start to introduce the new arrangements from next year. Costs in pupil referral units are four times as high as those in ordinary schools.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "Setting artificial targets for the reduction of truancy and exclusions will not, of itself, achieve anything unless heads are given the support they need to deal effectively with those pupils who ruin the education of their fellow pupils."

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No surrender – Paisley's fire and brimstone gospel

Defender of loyalist 'faith' rages against papist conspiracy.
Kim Sengupta reports

THE NOISE at the ultra-loyalist rally at Mungahel in Co Tyrone was deafeningly loud, repetitive and insistent. There was also a booming lambeg drum, traditionally used in Orange parades – but it was no match for the Rev Ian Paisley.

To his critics Mr Paisley, fiery preacher, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and standard bearer of the 'no' campaign against the Stormont agreement, symbolises the historical intransigence of Ulster Protestantism.

According to the polls, Mr Paisley has become a catalyst in the referendum campaign. He is entrenching the views of some loyalists who fear betrayal and slide towards united Ireland, but there are also those who are being driven into the 'yes' camp by what they see as his negativism and demagoguery.

The Government and the Ulster Unionist Party plan to capitalise on this in the run-up to polling day on 22 May. But Northern Ireland observers point out that Mr Paisley's involvement and influence in the province's politics is as long-standing as the conflict itself, and you write him off at your peril.

The 'Big Man', now aged 72, still has formidable pulling power. At the Moigashel rally, around 300 people



The Rev Ian Paisley: They have destroyed the act of the Union and given the title deeds of Ulster to Dublin on a plate
Photograph: Brian Harris

They fear they have been sacrificed for the sake of political expediency. There were the standard attacks on Sinn Féin, the IRA and republicanism, but the real venom was directed at Unionists who are backing the peace accord.

Posters decried the alleged betrayal: "What's the difference between David Trimble and Wolfe Tone? – 200 years," said one. Leaflets were handed out by courteous shaven-headed young men describing David Ervine of the Progressive Unionist Party as "the IRA's secret weapon".

The peace process is expected to face its most serious threat in the coming loyalist marching season. To those present, it was their birthright to take part in these marches without interference from the Government or republicans. Mr Paisley made his contribution: "Some of us here will be back up Drumcree and down again... it's no, it's no and it's no surrender."

Afterwards in the local Orange Hall, a quieter and more subdued Dr Paisley, as if spent by his rage, answered questions from a group of journalists. He had nothing against Catholics, he stressed, but added there is a theological theory that the Pope "was the anti-Christ".

turned up to stand in the rain and hear his invective against the peace process, and his description of its backers as agents of the devil.

On the makeshift platform, Mr Paisley was surrounded by the leading figures of the "no" campaign. In the wet night, under flickering street lights, the speeches were a mixture

of aggression and fatalism. Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, and George Mitchell, who chaired the multi-party talks, had conspired to deliver free Ulster into a papist united Ireland, declared Mr Paisley. David Trimble and other pro-agreement Unionists were traitors who had been suborned by the British government.

Thumping his fist into his palm, almost straining out of his tightly-buttoned white raincoat and tightly-knitted Union Jack tie, Dr Paisley raged: "They are liars. They have graduated from the devil's school."

"They have destroyed the act of the Union and given the title deeds

of Ulster to Dublin on a plate. These people have sold out Ulster. As for me, I would rather starve than take filthy British money."

The audience who blocked the town's main road included associates of the Loyalist Volunteer Force who went on a killing spree of Catholics after the assassination of

their leader, Billy Wright, in the Maze prison.

Mr Paisley has publicly dissociated himself from them. But also present were many ordinary working-class and middle-class Protestants who seemed bewildered that their loyalty to the Union appears to have been flung in their faces.

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Blair spearheads drive for 'Yes' vote in Ulster

By David McKittrick
Ireland Correspondent

A NUMBER of initiatives are being planned to boost the Yes campaign for the 22 May referendum, amid concerns that opinion in the Protestant community has yet to swing decisively in favour of the Good Friday agreement.

Tony Blair will pay a second visit to Belfast later this week, while Chancellor Gordon Brown is planning a multi-million pound package aimed at creating employment in Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, in an independent initiative two Belfast Protestant ministers will today announce the names of 150 ministers and 100 lay leaders who are recommending a Yes vote. All have subscribed to a declaration which states: "Whilst there are parts of the agreement which are unclear or even unsatisfactory, we believe that the agreement offers an opportunity for a new beginning for our country."

It has become obvious that both northern and southern nationalists are virtually unanimous in their support for the

accord. But with less than two weeks to go to the vital referendum on the agreement, the signs are that Protestant and Unionist opinion is evenly balanced, with a great many still unsure of how to vote.

A phone-in programme in which Tony Blair answered questions on Belfast's Downtown Radio yesterday confirmed the sense of a high level of Unionist anxiety. The pattern of questions, apparently mainly from Protestant callers, reflected concerns about the sincerity of the republican movement's commitment to democracy, the early release of prisoners and the future of the RUC.

The Prime Minister said there was no plan to disband the RUC, assuring callers that prisoners would only be released from jails, on licence, if both the individuals and their organisation had given up violence.

He insisted there would be no fudging on the arms decommissioning issue, saying of the possibility of Sinn Féin taking office: "We can't have a situation where people who have not given up the path of violence

are taking office in the Northern Ireland government."

He also promised "an absolute and determined will on behalf of the Government to clean up whatever dissident or disparate splinter elements there may be of these paramilitary organisations."

The triumphant welcome given to IRA prisoners, including members of the Balcombe Street gang, at Sinn Féin's weekend conference was seen as a setback to the Unionist Yes campaign.

Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble said: "The decision of the Secretary of State to release IRA terrorists so they could attend a meeting of Sinn Féin/IRA is going to have a negative impact. It ties in with a lot of similar actions in which she has shown considerable indulgence to republicans but considerable insensitivity towards Unionists."

Meanwhile, up to 400 prison officers staged demonstrations outside jails in Northern Ireland in protest against suggestions by the operational director of prison services, Martin Mogg, that some may be opposed to the agreement.

MPs seek resignation of NHS trust chief

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

A GROUP of MPs yesterday demanded the removal of the chairman of a major London teaching hospital to set an example in the rest of the National Health Service that poor management will not be tolerated.

They said heads must be made to roll when managers fail to come up to scratch and called on Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, to accelerate the introduction of performance measures for NHS boards.

In a rare display of public anger directed at one individual that echoes Mr Dobson's own determination to hold public figures to account, the Commons Select Committee on Public Administration said Sir Ronald Mason, chairman of the University College London Hospitals Trust, should have resigned after the trust was severely criticised by the NHS ombudsman last year.

At one stage the ombudsman was conducting five

investigations into complaints against the trust without any noticeable impact on its management, the MPs say.

The principal case involved the daughter of a man who died who was not told of her father's deteriorating condition and subsequent death and was not allowed to see his body for several hours after he died. After an investigation, the ombudsman found that the trust had shown a "disgraceful lack of sensitivity to a bereaved relative", failed to provide proper care, and failed to respond properly to complaints from her.

Sir Ronald, who chaired a committee dealing with complaints to the trust, told the MPs that there was nothing in the ombudsman's criticisms that made him doubt his own performance. Yesterday, the committee said his confidence was "completely unfounded" and invited Mr Dobson to remove him. "It is essential that NHS bodies are made properly accountable when they fail, if prompt action had been taken

in this case, we believe it would have sent a message to the NHS in general which would have had a galvanising effect across the institution."

Charles Marshall, the chief executive of UCH at the time the events occurred in 1994-95 who was also criticised, left the trust last March.

Failings in eight NHS trusts and health authorities are highlighted in the committee's latest report into the work of the NHS Ombudsman for 1996-97. It says it is particularly concerned about managers who have failed to respond to earlier criticism and urges ministers to deal decisively with those responsible.

Last night Sir Ronald Mason said he saw nothing in the committee's report to cause him to resign. Referring to the case of the bereaved daughter, he said: "Whilst I deeply regret the failings... we have made significant changes ensuring such problems are very unlikely to recur, as is evidenced by our performance over the past three years."

هكذا من الأصل

Tea, cakes and mobile phones: the secret of a boom town

By Kate Watson-Smyth

FOR years Banbury was known simply as a "tea and wee" stop along the A41 for travellers heading towards the theatrical delights of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford or the dreaming spires of Oxford. But despite its reputation as the town that everyone simply passes through, this market town of 40,000 inhabitants has just been named as the most prosperous town for business in the country, with the highest proportion of profit-making businesses in the UK.

At the other end of the scale, Sittingbourne, in north Kent, came last at 190th, much to the chagrin of the town's local council.

The research was based on a database of "key British enterprises" gathered by the business information consultancy, Dun & Bradstreet, which contains details of the 50,000 largest companies in the UK, along with building societies and firms of solicitors and accountants.

Philip Mellor, a senior analyst at the company, said Banbury's success was based on its communication links and quality of life.

"A lot of companies have moved there over the last three or four years and that has had a knock-on effect for many of the companies that were already there," he said. "It is close to both London and the Midlands and is situated right next to the M40 which means that it is well placed for distribution."

"Another reason is that its market is basically domestic so it has not been affected in the same way as businesses which rely heavily on exports."

Chris White, president of Banbury's Chamber of Commerce, said that unemployment was only two per cent and the success of companies relocating to the town, had greatly increased the standard of living.

He added that the demand for housing had increased greatly and there were plans for more than 4,000 houses by 2011.

But while the inhabitants of Banbury were delighted by the



Time out: People's Park in Banbury yesterday. The town's quality of life has persuaded new firms to move in

Photograph: John Voos

survey, the residents of Sittingbourne, where unemployment was last month below the national average of 4.9 per cent, were less than pleased.

Peter Jolley, the economic development manager for Swale Council, which includes Sittingbourne, said the town has "never had it so good".

"There are a lot of very successful businesses here and the retail side is really buoyant," he said. The area makes £86m a year from tourism, but where

as much of that came from on their way to Canterbury Cathedral, nowadays it is more likely to be relatives of the inmates in one of the three prisons on

the nearby Isle of Sheppey stopping for refreshments.

"One of the main problems is that we do not have the space to expand - to the north

A TALE OF TWO TOWNS

Population
Banbury 40,000
Sittingbourne 37,000

Unemployment
Banbury 2 per cent
Sittingbourne 4.4 per cent
(national average 4.9 per cent)

Crime (year ending March 1998)
Burglaries in Banbury down from 825 to 747. Burglaries in Sittingbourne down from 1,248 to 860

History
Banbury's *Ride a Cock Horse* rhyme widely recognised by the 1780s. Sittingbourne mentioned in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

Industry
Banbury's top three companies: Kraft, Jacob and Suchard (employs 1,100), Vodafone Retail UK (700), Alex Lawrie Factors (640). Sittingbourne - Sittingbourne Paper Company (500), New Thames Paper Company (400), Milton Pipes (200).

of the town there are 28,000 acres that have been designated as a special site for migrating birds and we cannot develop it.

earheads
'Yes'
Jlster

North Sea oil rigs 'can be removed'

By Michael McCarthy
Environment Correspondent

THERE are no technical or safety reasons why all the oil platforms in the North Sea cannot be removed, a senior Norwegian North Sea oil engineer told a London conference yesterday.

The view of the British oil industry and the British Government - that some very heavy platforms in deep water might need to be dumped on the seabed - is mistaken, according to Ronald Seim, a consultant to the Stavanger-based contractors Aker Offshore Partner AS.

Mr Seim and his company were involved in removing and dismantling the largest oil installation to be taken out of the North Sea, the Esso Odin gas platform, which was heavier than the Government thinks is practicable for removal.

Mr Seim was addressing a preliminary meeting in London of the Oslo-Paris Commission (OSPAR), the body which regulates the protection of the marine environment in the north-east Atlantic. In the aftermath of the 1995 controversy over Brent Spar, OSPAR is framing a treaty to be signed in July which will prohibit the sea dumping of all North Sea oil installations at the end of their natural lives.

As revealed in yesterday's *Independent*, Britain is seeking the option of dumping *in situ*

steel platforms in more than 75 metres of water whose underwater substructure weighs more than 4,000 tonnes. There are 64 such platforms in UK waters.

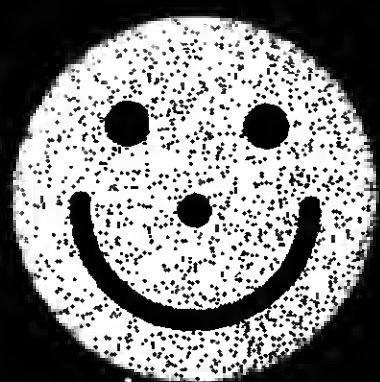
Michael Meacher, the environment minister, confirmed the Government's position yesterday: "I think everyone accepts the heaviest structures, or those that are fractured, or are in the deepest water, cannot be safely brought back to land, but in all other cases they will be."

Although Britain's stance is supported by Norway, the other major North Sea oil operator, it is opposed by the 15 other member states of OSPAR, who want a blanket ban on dumping.

James May, Director-General of the UK Offshore Operators Association (UKOOA), the body that represents Britain's North Sea oil companies said yesterday: "The question is, what is the best environmental option? To take out something like Esso Odin you would use huge amounts of energy - enough energy to power Aberdeen for a month - and there is a huge amount of potential environmental damage."

"Some platforms may have alternative uses. In the Gulf Of Mexico, the oil companies want to take the platforms out but environmentalists and fishermen want to keep them as artificial reefs, because they help the recovery of the fisheries. We think they should be looked at on a case-by-case basis," he said.

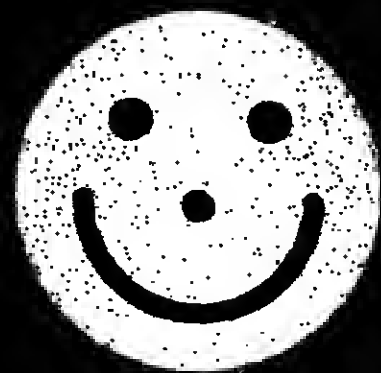
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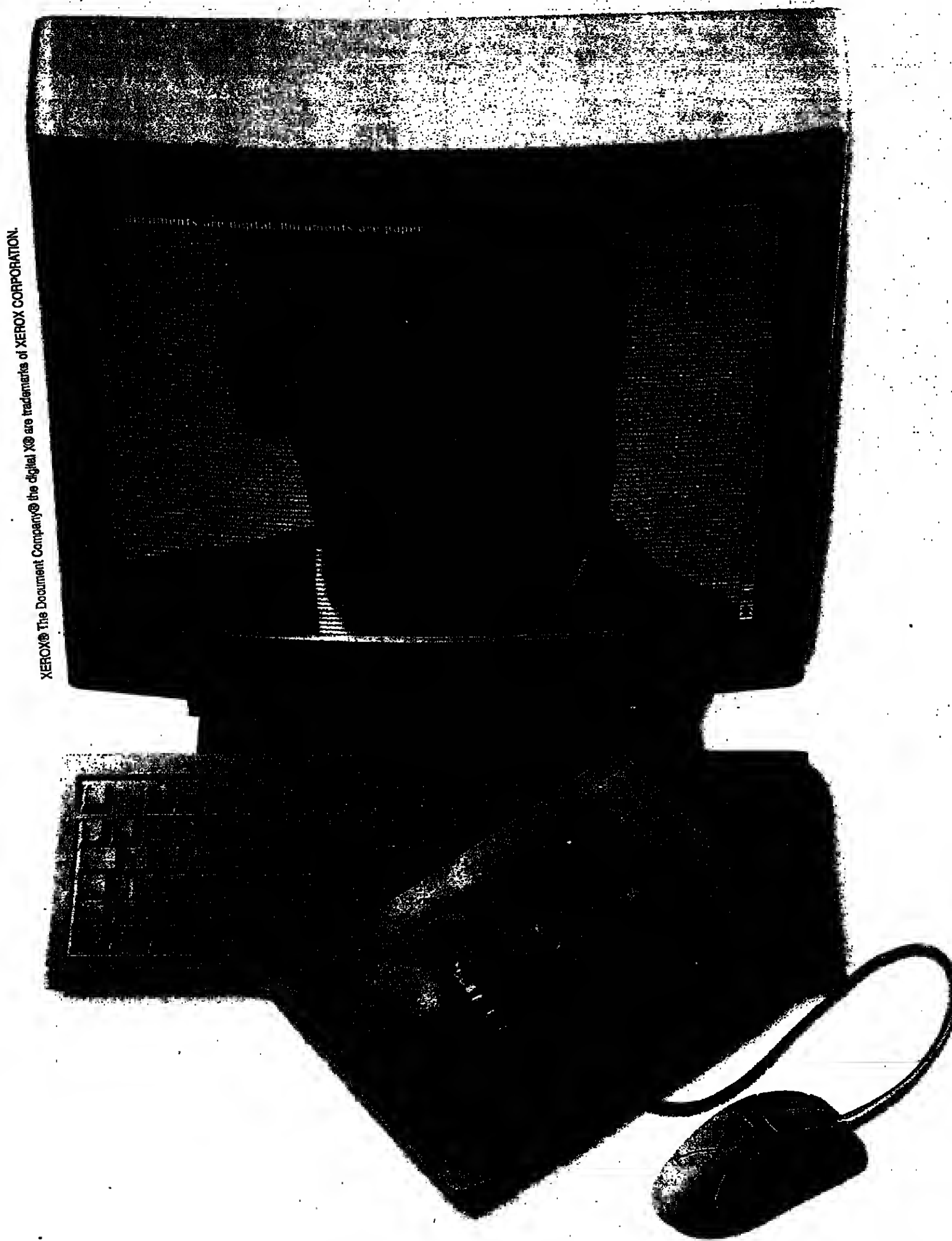
By John Kinsella

A Council-approved replacement
for box trees along the verges
of suburban roads, it embarrases
with its too sudden blush - stunning
at first, then a burning reminder
of something you'd rather forget.
And it unclothes so ungraciously -
its semi-clad, mangy, slovenly,
first thing-in-the-morning appearance.
And while I've heard it called
a bristling firestick, a spiral
of Southern Lights, I've also seen
honey-eaters bob upside down
and unpick its light in seconds.

This week's poems celebrate the work of John Kinsella, who was born in Perth, Western Australia in 1963, and mark the simultaneous publication of his *Poems 1980-1994* (Bloodaxe, £9.95) and his new volume, *The Hunt* (Bloodaxe, £7.95). This poem, reprinted in *Poems*, first appeared in *Eschatologies* (1991).

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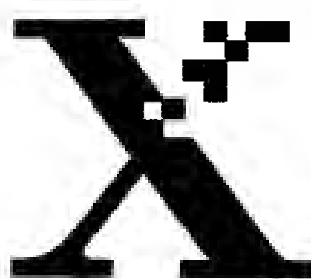
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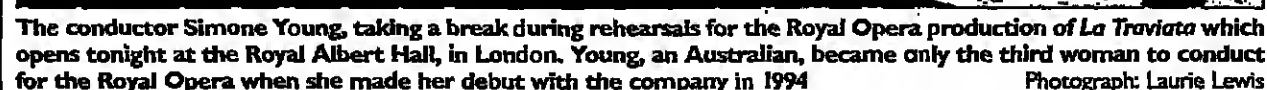
هكذا من الأصل

Nurses worked illegally at high-security hospital

Mr Backhouse told the inquiry he was kept in the dark about the concerns of nurses on the personality disorder unit, and was unaware that one of his principal social workers had been commissioned to work on an investigation into the admittance of Child A on to the unit's Lawrence Ward.

Lecturers driven abroad by short research contracts

The Dearing report into higher education, published last year, also warned that increasing use of short-term contracts could hit the quality of courses and research.



Cerebral palsy man wins action

Chris Evans wins vote for ministry of youth

Leading article, page 16

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'Sinner' Estrada wins over hearts of Filipino poor

By Stephen Vines
in Manila

WHEN President Bill Clinton arrived in the Philippines two years ago his security men spotted a large man sporting an Elvis Presley hair style lurching towards the presidential aircraft. Quick off the mark, they blocked his path. The large man was outraged. "I'm the Vice-President," he protested. Yesterday, that man declared himself the winner of the presidential poll, even though voting was still under way.

Joseph "Erap" Estrada may not look like a president or vice-president to United States security aides but he looks every bit the saviour to the poor in the Philippines, who make up the overwhelming majority of the population.

They are not bothered that he claims election victory before the votes are counted, or gets muddled by long sentences and would never have got into the mess facing President Clinton over sexual encounters with women.

Their man does not hide things such as womanising. "The people like the fact that he's the only candidate who's not a hypocrite," said Ronaldo Zamora, one of Erap's key campaign managers.

Erap - a nickname derived from the Filipino word for buddy - regards his love of women as an asset, indeed one of his best-known mistresses was out on the campaign trail with him.

His aides say he is now off alcohol. If true, sales of Johnnie Walker Blue Label must have slumped in the Philippines. There must also be distress in the casino industry which is reported to have lost a high-rolling client.

Will his lifestyle stop Erap winning the election? The

Catholic Bishops Conference, a highly influential body, made a last-ditch attempt to thwart his chances.

"Vote for persons who morally, intellectually and physically show themselves capable of inspiring the whole nation towards a hopeful future," said the bishops in a pastoral letter issued on Sunday. They did not need to say so but their appeal was a clear cry for the people to vote for anyone but Erap. But it looks as though it will fall on deaf ears.

Mr Estrada has struck a cord with the mass of the people who are struggling to make ends meet and have recently found that struggle even harder as the Philippines was hit by the tidal wave of the Asian financial crisis. Why will you vote for Erap? I have asked all sorts of people during this campaign. "Erap para sa mahirap," they invariably replied, echoing the campaign slogan of "Erap for the poor".

Yesterday, in the Tondo district of Manila, which used to be notorious for the vast rubbish dump known as Smoky Mountain where most of the people lived, voters crowding into polling stations were even shunning their local hero Alfredo Lim, who is also standing for president. "Erap is for us," said one old woman as an enthusiastic crowd gathered and nodded in agreement.

They see Mr Estrada as the only candidate who speaks their language and really cares about them. His critics and the intellectuals who are appalled by the thought of an Estrada presidency say that what they really see is the movie matinee idol who became a politician three decades ago but left an indelible impression on the national psyche by portraying the hero of the poor on the silver screen.

The plot of these highly popular films was simple - Erap, the bulky, heavily moustached man from the streets would be pitted against a rich and more powerful opponent, yet, in his simple way, managed to defeat the big guy.

Theresa Erricito, one of his many daughters, insists that Mr Estrada's supporters no longer view him as a movie star. "They admire what he has done for the people," she insisted, "what he has achieved in government."

It is true that Erap became a successful mayor of San Juan, a suburb of Manila, but it is hard to point to any success he had either as a senator or as vice-president. In the senate he was best known for sleeping during its interminable meetings. As vice-president, he headed a crime-busting unit which drew a very thin line between fighting crime and behaving in an unlawful way towards suspects.

Once President Fidel Ramos pushed his deputy out of this unit he gave him nothing else to do and treated him with contempt. Erap's revenge is likely to emerge when the votes are counted and Jose de Venecia, the candidate backed by President Ramos, is spurned.

However, Philippine elections are known neither for their sobriety nor their certainty. Mr Estrada is facing a mighty machine under Mr de Venecia's command. That machine might prove better at getting out the vote.

If it does not, stand by for a very different style of government. President Ramos, the workaholic who rises at dawn, will be replaced by Mr Estrada who is not at best in the hours of daylight and happily admits that he will leave all the bothersome details of government to a big team of advisers.



'Erap' Estrada, who speaks the language of the poor not the language of government

Photograph: Bullit Marquez/AP

Hungary left considers pact

HUNGARY'S hard-pressed Socialists decided yesterday to step up their general election campaign to stay ahead of an emerging right but did not exclude the possibility of a broad coalition.

"In politics nothing can be ruled out," Socialist Prime Minister Gyula Horn said after a meeting of the party's presidium. "It is very important to preserve stability and the country's ability to operate."

The Socialists gained 32.25 per cent of the vote in Sunday's first round but their coalition partner Free Democrats fell below 8 per cent while second place Fidesz shot up to 28.2 per cent. The agrarian Smallholders rose sharply to 13.8 per cent and the far-right Hungarian Justice and Life Party scored 5.5 per cent, to enter parliament for the first time. Reuters, Budapest

Italy murders

A GAMBLER suspected of murdering women travelling alone on trains is being investigated for more than 20 other killings on the Italian Riviera from 1993. Prosecutors said they were looking into all unsolved murders in the area for links to the suspect, Donato Bilancia.

Bilancia, 47, was arrested last week in Genoa in connection with the two train killings. Investigators later said he was a suspect in the deaths of four prostitutes and two security guards. AP, Rome

Somali clashes

AT LEAST 14 people died and 25 were wounded in fresh fighting on Sunday and Monday between rival Somali factions around the southern port of Kismayu, witnesses said.

General Mohamed Saeed Hirs Morgan's Majertein clan was reported to have made further advances to the north and yesterday captured Kamsu, on the road to Mogadishu, after heavy clashes with the Marehan clan. Local reports said that he casualties were mainly among militiamen from both sides. Reuters, Mogadishu

Rwanda party

RWANDANS sought release yesterday from the threat of death and economic hardship as they danced in homage to reggae legend Bob Marley whose message of peace and unity has found fertile ground in the central African nation. Some 7,000 young people who gathered on the Nyamirambo soccer field to commemorate the 17th anniversary of the Jamaican's death. AP, Kigali

PHILIPPINE POLLS - ANY EXCUSE FOR A PARTY

HOW do you find one of the 174,374 polling stations in the Philippines? Follow the paper trail. Mounds of discarded leaflets litter the streets in front of the stations, which are festooned with flags and posters bearing candidates' names.

It looks more like a fiesta than an election day. "Elections are like feast days or Christmas," said Father Ferdinand Hernandez, one of the many poll watchers trying to keep the poll clean. "It's part of the Philippine culture to make a feast out of everything, even funerals," he added with a smile.

Most polling stations are in schools where every

classroom is transformed into a voting station for each sub-district. Inside voters face the arduous task of writing down the names of 30 candidates for every post, from president to city councillor. The voting booths are cardboard boxes balanced on the knees of electors. There are no printed lists of candidates on the forms.

Counting is done laboriously by tellers calling out the names on the slips one by one to a team marking them off on big lists. The 'quick' count in this election will take 10 days to complete while the long count will take even more time.

Kinkel makes aid immigration issue

By Imre Karacs
Bonn

IN AN election race increasingly inspired by fear and loathing of foreigners, Germany's Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, leapt to the head of the field yesterday with an imaginative plan to punish the Third World. African and Asian countries resisting the repatriation of their citizens should, he suggested, be deprived of aid.

Mr Kinkel outlined the plan, to be written into the election

manifesto of his Free Democrat Party, in an interview with the tabloid Bild Zeitung. "It cannot go on that some countries block the deportation of their own citizens from Germany," the Foreign Minister said.

"When countries fail to co-operate in this area, they must be made aware of the possible consequences: reduction or withdrawal of foreign aid."

Eighteen countries in Africa are said to be guilty of hindering the German clear-out, including Ghana, Nigeria, Togo,

Gambia, Bangladesh and famine-ravaged Sudan. Germany has 270,000 asylum-seekers awaiting the knock on the door from immigration officials.

An estimated 70,000 come from Mr Kinkel's hit-list, constituting less than 0.1 per cent of Germany's population, while a further 9,000 are believed to have arrived from Africa and Asia. The latter group cannot be repatriated because they had taken the precaution of burning their passports, and will not tell Germans where "home" is.

Although black and Asian people are anything but visible, confined as they are to detention centres and refugee homes, they have a high profile in German media reports dealing with crime, and jibes at their expense play well at election rallies. Apart from the Greens, no party is willing to speak up on their behalf.

After elections last month in the Land of Saxony-Anhalt, where the racist German People's Union swept up 13 per cent of the vote, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's coalition renewed its in-

terest in the threats and inconveniences posed by foreigners.

Until yesterday, Mr Kohl's Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union, led the way with calls for the repatriation of entire families where one juvenile is caught shoplifting. Mr Kinkel has now trumped that with his plan, to the irritation of his Bavarian colleagues. The Minister for Development Aid, Carl-Dieter Spranger, who is a member of the CSU, was quick to protest yesterday at not having been consulted.

Where world debt takes away the lives of children

THERE was not a single cloud in the expansive blue African sky. Through the trees, the waters of the grey-green Zambezi River could be seen only 30 yards off. The great silence was punctuated only by the song of birds and the occasional bellow of a hippopotamus.

As we walked into the clinic the staff were, with proud anxiety, raising a World Bank flag. Perhaps white faces could only mean to them that the funders had arrived.

It was a splendid new hospital, with walls of baked mud and a shiny new roof. The only thing was that it had no beds. And cuts in the Zambian health budget meant that the number of doctors had been halved and the drugs cupboard was bare.

A pretty girl with long dark braided hair, wearing a dusty maroon and brown print dress, stood barefoot before the admissions table. She was aged about four. Her mother, a tall

Paul Valley looks at the people who have most to gain from the G8 summit

stately figure whose poverty seemed only to enhance her dignity, spoke anxiously to the paramedic.

Suddenly the child retched violently and spewed a stream of vomit all over her mother and the medic. She was, a doctor diagnosed, in the grip of the latter stages of malaria. "This is a very sick little girl," he said.

It may have been too late to save her in any case. We would never know. The clinic had no anti-malaria drugs. She was given paracetamol and taken away to die.

It was a routine event. Later I met a doctor at another clinic who said that the monthly box of drugs which clinics receive from the Ministry of Health usually lasts only a fortnight.

The health budget is just one area in which extensive "adjustments" to the budget have been made under an IMF-backed programme to help Zambia find enough money to pay the interest on its debts to the rich world - a world whose leaders meet at the G8 summit in Birmingham to discuss Third World Debt this weekend. Such programmes are in operation all over the Africa. Today, Zambia spends three times as much paying interest on its debts as it spends on healthcare.

That is not all. At the behest of the Western creditor governments, the Zambian health service has been reorganised along the purchaser/provider system which has caused such controversy in the British NHS. So there is a familiar air to

POSTCARD FROM



AFRICA

the complaints. "There are too many managers and not enough doctors," one medic told me, from the 80-bed Chikuni mission hospital, which under the restructuring has been told to downgrade itself to a health centre and send its doctors nearly 200 miles to the nearest official hospital.

Fees have been introduced. Fees for hospital registration, fees for each blood test, and more fees for the medicine.

As a result, one survey - financed by the Catholic aid agency Cafod - has shown that

in Lusaka the number of out-patients has dropped by two-thirds since fees were introduced.

Infant mortality, once diminishing, is on the increase. Today one child in five dies before its fifth birthday.

According to the IMF there are supposed to be waivers for the poor. In theory. In practice some hospitals refuse to administer them; others make them so complicated that the poor are too bemused to apply.

In any case there is not always time. In a village near Lisutu recently an eight-month-old baby developed malaria. It took her parents two days to raise the 3,000 kwacha in hospital fees.

Eventually they collected it by going round relatives and friends and then walked for three hours to the hospital. The child died in her mother's arms at the hospital gate: 3,000 kwacha is 1.02 pence.



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By Teresa Poole

Fiction and fact: Tojo's trial in the film (above), and the actual hearing (left) Photograph: Reuters

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Real men can have feelings

The motor trade might not be the first place you would look to find a group of males discussing the things that get them down at work and home. It's a healthy trend - but will it catch on? By Peter Baker

A SMALL room above a workshop on an industrial estate near Tunbridge Wells probably sounds an unpromising place to try to help a group of men develop greater self-awareness and interpersonal skills. Also, these men are definitely not new-age types into tree-hugging or sweat lodges, but regular blokes working in the motor industry.

Hardly a week goes by without another instalment in the "Men in Trouble" story. Last week, a NSPCC conference on Men as Fathers heard that many men are struggling to balance work with family life, with many feeling obliged to hide their involvement with children from their colleagues. And a survey of 1,000 office workers showed that 82 per cent of men hate working for a woman - tricky when female managers have increased by 60 per cent since 1994.

But at the MCL Group, a car importing, distribution and marketing company, they know about these things. Ten men, all junior managers in their 20s and 30s, have volunteered to join Navigator, a unique workplace-based personal development programme for men run by The Springboard Consultancy. This is the second of four one-day training sessions. Downstairs, the latest shiny and sporty Mazdas are being lovingly inspected by men in overalls. Upstairs, in the training room, their colleagues, mostly dressed in jeans and trainers, are exploring how to cope with change, better understand body language and improve their listening skills.

There is, of course, plenty of banter. When the facilitator, James Traeger, explains that everyone has a "personal zone" extending up to 46cm from their body, he is told "you must have a big 'un". When asked about goals, David suggests: "I might try lager rather than bitter tonight." And John's decision to lose 5lbs is greeted with: "That's just one dump." Traeger reminds the group that they discussed banter and agreed it was acceptable so long as it did not turn into put-downs. But the joking is sporadic and good-humoured and does not inhibit discussion of serious issues.

Listening is a key topic in the afternoon session. Traeger begins by asking the men to work in pairs. One man has to talk about something that interests him while the other pretends to be bored or indifferent. The aim is to demonstrate how hard it is to communicate when you are being ignored. Traeger then explains that when people talk they are communicating three things: thoughts, feelings and intentions. To demonstrate this, the men are divided into small groups. Each man talks for five minutes while his colleagues observe and then discuss.

The subjects would amaze anyone who still believes most men are incapable of reflecting on little besides sport, beer and politics. David talks openly about the effects on his life of surviving a serious car crash and, soon after, a life-threatening case of testicular cancer. James (not Traeger) de-

scribes how he wants to put more energy into his family life, while Andy speaks of his doubts about marriage and how difficult that is for his girlfriend.

Traeger moves on to other key themes. He explains how men can cope better with the feelings engendered by change (which range from shock and denial to anger and depression), take risks at work and in their personal lives and adopt new ways of learning. The day ends with a goal-setting exercise for the next session in four weeks' time.

A recurring issue, and one that explains why these men chose to join Navigator, is that they feel in a rut at work and that, despite decent salaries and subsidised sports cars, their jobs seem to be going nowhere. Several explain that their work has become very specialised, making it hard to move within the company, and, because there are no similar firms in the local area, changing employers would require difficult life-changes.

This sense of dissatisfaction with work resonates with many men's experience of the contemporary workplace. The end of the job for life, the replacement of manufacturing with service industries, the flattening of traditional hierarchies, the increasingly important role of women and the demand

The programme refuses to accept that men are inherently hopeless and attempts to help them adapt to changing times

for new "feminine" skills, such as communication, teamwork and flexibility, are fundamentally altering men's relationship with work, profoundly affecting their sense of identity and self-esteem.

Navigator aims to help men deal better with these issues. While many commentators bemoan contemporary masculinity, this programme refuses to accept that men are inherently hopeless and is one of a few attempts to help men adapt to the changing times. "It's about giving men a sense of direction, enabling them to take responsibility for themselves and extending their skills," explains Traeger. "Navigator examines male identity and values, explores relationships with women, provides an opportunity for realistic self-assessment and develops interpersonal abilities. It's not about creating 'new men'; it's about helping men develop their own solutions."

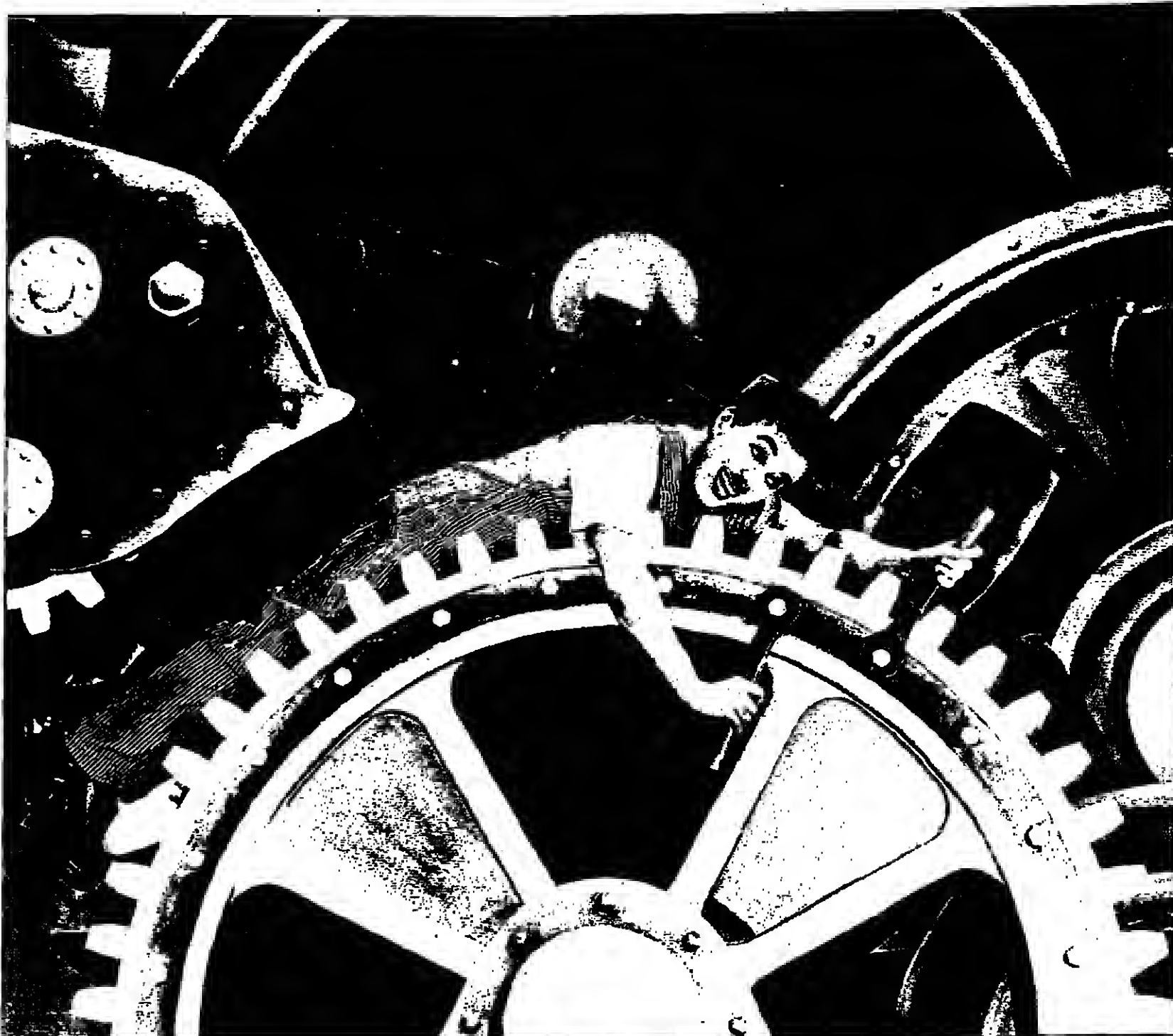
As MCL's interest in Navigator suggests, it is not intended to appeal to firms which are weird or wacky. Indeed, the programme

has already been piloted with a banking group, four local authorities, a telecommunications company and a university and is due to be formally launched this summer. Traeger is already discussing introducing the programme to several government departments and Navigator will soon be marketing itself to companies as a means of creating "improved efficiency from a more realistically self-assessing male population", "better customer care from more empathic workers", and "motivated men with self-directed learning agendas".

Sally Vanson, MCL's human resources director, has no doubts about the value of the training. "We first ran a women's development programme, but then realised that our junior male managers were also lacking in confidence about their careers. The aim is to help all our employees be more fulfilled and the feedback I have had from the men so far has been positive."

There have been more applications from men wanting to join Navigator than there are places available. Whether this type of training will make a long-term difference remains to be seen. It has been argued, for example, that many men are incapable of fundamental personal change until they experience a personal trauma, such as redundancy, divorce or serious illness. One ironic outcome of introducing such programmes could be that, instead of developing the skills of flexibility and empathy, they simply start competing about their ability to co-operate.

But listening to Nick tell his colleagues that he has recently become a father, is suffering from backache and no longer wants to work a 65-hour week, it does seem possible that Navigator could be one way men can develop a much-needed new sense of identity at work as well as a better balance between work and home that will ultimately benefit women and children, too.



Going round in circles: Like Charlie Chaplin in 'Modern Times', many men feel in a rut at work and that their jobs are going nowhere Photograph: MSI

Can Tessa Jowell turn you into a better bloke?

THE Department of Health launched its first advice booklet aimed at men yesterday. "Life Begins at 40: Health Tips for Men", is aimed primarily at middle-aged, working-class men, a group at particular risk of heart disease and cancer, and will be distributed through male-oriented sites, such as DIY stores and sports clubs. The booklet contains advice about smoking, drinking, stress and exercise and uses "blokey" cartoon humour to get its message across.

It is a long-overdue initiative. Health pages in newspapers and magazines are full of articles on prostate cancer, impotence and falling sperm counts, and bookshops are brimming with self-help health books for men. Pick up the phone and you can talk about sexual difficulties, depression, infertility - any problem affecting the modern male. It seems men's health is more talked about than ever.

Except by the Government. In "Our Healthier Nation", the recently published blueprint for the future of public health, men's problems are conspicuous only by their absence. But, belatedly, there are now signs of change. Although Tessa Jowell, the

minister for health, rejects talk of "a crisis" in men's health, she accepts that "being a man is a cause of health inequality", and is particularly concerned about men's high levels of heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, accidents and suicide.

The minister believes the reasons for the poor state of men's health are as yet unclear, but are probably both biological and social. "Men are more likely than women to take more risks with their health and less likely to seek help at the earliest possible stage," she says.

On average, men visit their GP half as often as women. Women, says the minister, "are more in touch with health services because they are more likely to take the children". She also suggests that the rise in suicides of 71 per cent in a decade among 15 to 24-year-old men could be "something to do with unemployment, a culture of hopelessness and the loss of useful roles".

She says: "We have to build initiatives to prevent ill health and premature death which are relevant to men and they will be different from those which we develop for women. If we want to

reach women, we put leaflets in supermarkets, but I think we've got to be much more imaginative about the way we reach men. Maybe information needs to go in pubs, in gyms and workplaces." Using footballers and other sports role models could also help get positive messages across. Hence the new leaflet.

But Ms Jowell places much more emphasis on the role of Healthy Living Centres (HLCs), one of the Government's big health ideas. Funded by the National Lottery, these are intended to respond to local health needs, with a focus on diet, smoking, drinking, drug misuse and physical activity.

Although she is vague about how they might work with men, the minister believes they could become sites for "well-man" clinics. A recent Gallup survey suggested that three-quarters of men would like to see more of these.

Although she is not convinced of the need for a national screening programme for prostate cancer - "the evidence is highly equivocal and it's been put on the backburner" - Ms Jowell does support promoting testicular self-examination among

younger men. Rates for testicular cancer have doubled in the past 20 years.

The Government is also commissioning research into sperm counts, which have halved since 1940. "Some of the suggested trends are undoubtedly sinister, but it's important not to draw hasty conclusions without being absolutely sure about the scientific evidence," she says.

One men's health Government initiative already in place is CALM - the Campaign Against Living Miserably, a helpline for young men in Manchester, an area with twice the national rate of suicide. Since its launch in December, CALM has responded to more than 3,000 calls and the scheme has been extended beyond its original three-month lifespan. "We ought to look at CALM's effectiveness and see what can be applied to other parts of the country, perhaps through HLCs," says Ms Jowell.

But the responsibility for improving men's health does not just rest with politicians. If men were to campaign as women have, there is little doubt their health could be transformed.

Peter Baker

TV laughter is the best medicine



DR PHIL HAMMOND

"WHO'S the other guest?" "Patrick Moore." "Well, they won't touch him. He's a national treasure. So what have they got on you?" "I've got an idea." "You must be fucking mad."

So pronounced a colleague after I'd agreed to appear on *Have I Got News For You*. I wasn't going to until Boris Johnson kindly bleated in *The Spectator* that it was a pre-scripted fix. If I could just get my hands on the script, cover all the angles and come out fighting. So, I agreed, on condition that they bike a copy down for me to digest in advance. I waited in all day Monday. Nothing. And Tuesday. Nothing again. Bastards.

When I arrived at the studios, I was spat at and jostled by the security staff. One knocked off my glasses and crushed them under an orthopaedic shoe. Then Ian Hislop appeared through a cloud of dry ice in a pink crutchless tutu screaming: "Hey, ginge! We're going to dance on your grave tonight." Or it could have been: "Hello Phil, would you like a cup of tea?" On the way to

make up, I passed Paul Merton dressed as some sort of reaper. He looks so nice on TV, but when I asked to see a copy of the script, he brought his scythe down on my left arm and sliced it clean off at the elbow.

Fortunately, this left me one for the tea which, in all fairness, was thoroughly pleasant. Unfortunately, it had been spiked with the date-rape drug rohypnol. The rest of the evening is a blur. I have vague memories of the dark, shadowy images of Hislop and Merton beaming down on me from either end, while Deighton smirked and a large man with a monocle used my mid-section as a xylophone. I was discovered three weeks later in the staff toilet at Limpley Stoke Happy Eater. A tough gig, but a picnic compared with *Tibs and Fibs*.

Tibs and Fibs - you may remember - was a madcap medical quiz that faded out of the Channel 5 line-up a few months ago. The 26 episodes took 10 days to record, and most nights we were turning round three shows in a session. The studio audiences ranged from seven to 70 - in age and size - and there were some decidedly dodgy

rounds (eg: Dr Hilary asking Craig Charles to draw the symphysis pubis on a bikini-clad model with an indelible pen). But it was the structure that really did for it. The captains were both doctors and we knew most of the answers. The guests weren't and didn't. So either the guests had to be pre-briefed with the correct answers ("Craig, what are milttschmerz?" "Ooh... I know. Is it pain in the lower abdomen experienced about midway between successive menstrual periods?"). Or the questions had to be dumbed down ("Who knows a song with doctor in the title?") or the scoring had to be totally abandoned.

We went mainly for the latter - a big mistake because no matter how stupid the show, the audience care about the score. And so should the contestants. Ian Hislop warned me at the outset of HIGNFY that we would lose. "Paul is doubly competitive. He'll start by being funniest and then when the 'odd one out' round comes in, he starts concentrating on winning. But at least it gives other people the chance to crack a joke." In fact, the skill of the show

is that Deighton allows contestants the space to spar whenever they want to. With only one show to record, there's all the time in the world to shine or make a complete tit of yourself. The result lasts 75 minutes but edits to 30 - not just to cut out the dead wood but to balance the contributions and damp down slander and obscenity.

As for preparation, Deighton links from an autocue. Wow. There is no script or rehearsal. You do get to see - very briefly - the video clips, odd one out and headlines two hours before kick off. This is primarily to stop new guests soiling their pants. But all it really does is provide a structure to ad lib around.

Once the rohypnol kicked in, my contributions became ever more unpredictable, but each time Merton trumped them with something much funnier and with impeccable timing. I had captained 26 episodes of *Tibs and Fibs* without smiling once, and within a minute I was grinning like a village idiot. Deighton and Hislop, too, are happy living off their cuffs. Take it from a doctor. These boys can improvise.

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WORLD COVER
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He defied the US government. Now it must decide: has Bill Gates finally got too big for his own boots?

HISTORY may be made in Washington this week, and we are not talking about the Middle East peace process or the latest twist in President Clinton's sexgate saga. Featuring the US Justice Department and a single corporation far away on the West Coast, this is much drier fare, with baffling buzzwords like "bundling" and "browsers". Know that that company is Microsoft, however, and you begin to guess at its importance.

Even the barely computer-literate among us understand the power of Microsoft and its mega-billionaire CEO, William Gates III. Its Windows operating systems are to be found in no less than 90 per cent of all personal computers bought today. The Seattle-based behemoth has become the prime symbol of energy and innovation in a humming US economy. Because of its success, however, it is also feared.

It is that fear that may now threaten much of what Microsoft has achieved. Anti-trust (or monopoly) regulators in the Justice Department, as well as politicians in several US states, are asking themselves a highly portentous question: is Mr Gates now presiding over a monopoly so powerful that free competition in the computer sector is being stifled? Is Microsoft, with its easy-to-use Windows technology, good news for consumers, or is it actually bad news? If the latter is the case, what is to be done?

Unfolding before us is a government-vs-private-enterprise battle of gigantic proportions that dates back to the introduction three years ago of Windows 95. In a first lunge at Microsoft, the Justice Department persuaded Mr Gates to desist from bundling into Windows a new feature called Internet Explorer. Known as a "browser", it offered users a free direct connection to the pages of the World Wide

By David Osborne

Web. It was Mr Gates' first attempt to seize primacy in the newly-emerging Internet market and flatten others who had grasped its importance before him, notably Netscape Communications.

Since then, the Justice Department has accused Gates of renegeing on that deal and has filed with the federal courts for an injunction against Microsoft selling any more Windows programmes with an integrated Explorer function. A ruling from the courts is now pending and last week Microsoft filed a pre-emptive appeal.

In recent days, however, the war has become considerably hotter, and for one principle reason: on Friday, Microsoft plans to begin shipping to PC manufacturers its sequel to Windows 95. It is Windows 98 and, needless to say, among the options that will appear on its start-up screen is Internet Explorer. Windows 98 is scheduled to be available on computer-shop shelves towards the end of June.

In the realm of public opinion, Mr Gates may be winning. Most Americans think he should be left alone

What has been evident for some time is that the Justice Department and the single-minded Tsar of the Microsoft dossier, Joel Klein, is weighing a much broader anti-

trust action against Microsoft than the one already in train. It is also clear that if the action is indeed to be launched, it probably will have to happen before Friday. There is one immediate possible consequence: a new and instant order that Explorer be stripped from Windows 98 before it is shipped. That could delay its launch by several months.

And it is not just Mr Klein that Microsoft has to worry about. Eager to win their own starring roles in what may be the biggest anti-trust action since the break-up in 1911 of Standard Oil – the Rockefeller-owned giant that held a 90 per cent share in its US market – the attorneys general of as many as 20 individual US states are also considering lawsuits against the company for monopoly behaviour.

Just how far Mr Klein might want to go in humbling Microsoft is still a matter entirely of conjecture. While seeking its break-up à la Standard is an option, most observers still consider it unlikely. Forcing Gates to un-bundle Explorer would surely be a first line of attack, however. He might even seek to oblige Microsoft to make amends for past sins, for instance by actually featuring Netscape's rival browser function on the Windows platform. As a justification, Mr Klein could point out that once Microsoft began essentially giving away its browser for free as part of Windows, Netscape's share of the Internet-connection market plunged from a high of 75 per cent to about 55 per cent today.

Speculation is also rife that Mr Gates will be accused simultaneously of abusing an agreement he struck with rival Sun Microsystems to use its pioneering Java computer language on the Windows platform. Sun has alleged that Java was conceived as a language that could be used on all types of computers, and that Microsoft, by



slightly altering its version of Java, has basically sabotaged that essential feature.

Events could, however, take a much less dramatic turn. Conceivably, Klein and Gates might yet strike an amicable settlement. It is even possible that the Justice Department and some of the attorneys general could retreat from battle, particularly if they conclude that they are on the wrong side of the philosophical argument about government intrusion in private enterprise.

Microsoft, needless to say, has been running a high-octane spin campaign in de-

fence of its practices for very many months. Politicians, journalists and Klein himself have been furiously lobbied. At a rally in New York last week, Gates surrounded himself with CEOs from other computer companies all exclaiming that any delay in the release of Windows 98 could be ruinous for them and even for the US economy at large. And in the realm of public opinion, Mr Gates may be winning. A poll commissioned by Microsoft last week suggested that most ordinary Americans think Microsoft should be left alone.

The enemies of Microsoft like to indulge in almost Biblical metaphors about the doom that a Microsoft monopoly will visit upon us. "If it's Microsoft versus mankind," remarked Larry Ellison, the chief of Oracle, "I'm on the team of mankind." But others with faith in the free market's power of self-correction have a quite different take. If Windows is on 90 per cent of computers there is a reason: people like it.

It is a conundrum, and this week it belongs to Mr Klein.

THE INDEPENDENT



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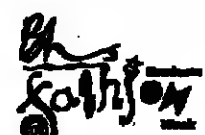
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'My mother thought Shakespeare sent me mad'

REVELATIONS

The times: 1982
The places: Small Heath, Birmingham
The man: David Harewood, actor

I LAUGH when I walk round the National Theatre, where I am playing Othello, and look at the pictures of the famous actors in famous plays - I haven't heard of any of them. I am a fraud: a lark-about, mess-about kid from Birmingham who's touring the world with this great Shakespearean work. I don't know a lot about theatre because I didn't ever really want to be an actor.

Academically, I was over a high-flyer at Washwood Heath comprehensive school, mainly because I was the class clown. I stayed on for sixth form because the opportunities were slim. I was being geared up for factory fodder at the local Lucas or Leyland plant, the alternative was the dole.

I remember being phoned up by my English teacher, Mr Reader, who wanted to have a chat. I had no idea what he wanted. He sat me down and asked the most incredible question: "Have you ever thought of being an actor?" He thought I was a very talented entertainer, especially after my class took school assembly and I'd do a speech off the top of my head. Later, I learnt I was about to be thrown out

for not doing any work. I had no idea what being an actor entailed, but having no better job plans, I thought I might as well give it a go.

It was so ridiculous because there were no black people on TV and the Black and White Minstrel Show could still have been playing. My mother was cooking dinner, and I said: "I think I'm going to be an actor" and without turning round she replied "mmmh, we'll see." My dad, a long-distance lorry driver, refused to let me do it. West Indian parents are very aware of the need to earn a living. None of the family were theatre people, over even visited one! They were gobsmacked. My brothers laughed and my sister was quite worried because it most probably meant going down to London where you are murdered or end up at Kings Cross selling your bum!

I had an audition for the Birmingham Youth Theatre and, luckily enough, I'd learnt two speeches from Othello. One by Othello himself and the other by Iago - because I couldn't make my mind up which one I wanted to play! I had no idea of the political shenanigans which surround my life. Unfortunately there was no place for me. I wasn't crestfallen, it would just be tougher than I first thought. Three days later I found out about a six-week course at the National Youth Theatre.

I had the most brilliant time. There were three other black guys, but two of them completely ignored me. It was the first time I got a taste of what it would be like to be in competition in the business.

Finally, I won a place at RADA, but with no goals, no ambitions, I was just having a laugh. I went home after the first term speaking like Prince

actor. My first job was Romeo and I was being asked what it was like to play him and be black. It completely threw me. I was in this no man's land playing parts that were usually white and critics were forever pointing this out.

After two years I ended up having a breakdown. I wasn't going to talk about it publicly but here goes. It sprung from



Charles and my mother went mad. They wanted me to learn the received pronunciation so I didn't have to play brummies all my life, we were told to keep it up over the holidays - but all I could manage was three days because my mates took the piss.

I came out of drama school and suddenly I was a black

undercover secret agent. Rather than telling them to fuck off I was trying to be different characters for different people - hoping to make everybody like me. I ended up feeling exhausted.

In the last few days before I collapsed, I was incredibly mentally active. Luckily because I'm an entertainer it was not manifesting itself in violence. I was just being very funny. All my mates knew there was something wrong because I was manic, seeing things from strange angles and dressing. Finally I passed out and was rushed to hospital. I nearly ended up in a top security mental institution because I was zipping in and out of different characters and quoting Shakespeare.

Fortunately my friends told them I was an actor and luckily the course on duty believed their story. She could have gone tick and I would have been committed.

I was completely out for three days. I don't remember anything, just waking up and seeing all my family round the bed. There were times when I was almost like a vegetable and could only communicate with my eyes; at other times I went berserk which made my parents even more upset. With all the drugs inside me, I started behaving like some mad person. To this day the doctors still don't know what happened to me, my mother was convinced that Shakespeare sent me mad.

When I was given the role of Othello at the National,

there were some terrible articles. I have one pinned on my wall, it made me so angry: "Why has it been given to this young unknown black actor, who there are countless white actors who could black up and play the role?"

These are the attitudes I would like to confront. It is now ridiculous to see a white person blacked up. White actors find it difficult to key into, coming from so little, to have risen so high and then to be destroyed. Even today I could walk out of this theatre, after playing in one of the most successful Shakespearean productions in the National's history and be on the dole. There is a ceiling for black actors and it is very difficult to have a career.

The world out there for me is still very real and very white. But I know I'll never go back to that hospital again, I've learnt that I'm not the only one. It might seem strange as I'm 32, but what I didn't have before was a grounding in my black consciousness. My preparation and reading for Othello has helped me achieve that. I now have an idea where I fit into the big picture. I still walk into shops and the owners reach for the stock as if I'm going to steal it. These realities I take on stage every night - every night. That's where Othello has helped me, I'm not playing - I'm being.

Interview by Andrew G Marshall

Othello is at the National Theatre until the 13th of June.

The tedium is not the message

Image was everything at the 150th anniversary celebration of Marx's 'Communist Manifesto', observes Michael Glover

THIS is a night of hope, a night of renewal, I am thinking to myself as I tentatively approach the seething entrance to the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, that Thirties temple of radical thinking.

Yes, here they all are, hundreds of them, the old street-fighting, leftie theoreticians of yesteryear, gathered together on this balmy Saturday night – and what better weather could one imagine than this for an imaginative re-run of the great proletarian project? – to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first publication of the *Communist Manifesto*.

I can hardly get through them all, all these cheerily persistent paper-thrusters, pamphlet pushers, pamphlet penners, radical newspaper sellers, leftie booksellers. Makeshift book stalls have been erected in the street to advertise the latest from the magical Merlin Press – the *Socialist Register*, for example, an annual collection of essays, which was first published in the early Sixties and dreams on to this day.

Every copy, whether this year's or the year before the year before last's, is on sale at £10. This can mean only one thing: there is no such thing as a remaindered book to the leftist publisher. An old book becomes an instant and highly collectable classic, steeped in the wisdom of yesterday.

A smiling Iraqi gentleman thrusts a copy of a Communist Party manifesto into my face. I ask him whether this is the real Communist Party or some fractionally splinter group. He smiles at me engagingly. "We are the fact Communist Party," he replies. And then, with great attention to detail, he hands over six sheets of A4 paper which bristle with exclamation marks, every one a deadly taunt to the faint of

heart: "Workers! Freedom Loving People! Parties, Political and Mass Organisations and all those who defend Political Freedom and Human Rights!"

Sad to say, many of the freedom-loving people gathered here tonight for this morale-boosting occasion are extremely delicate looking. I count at least one zimmer frame, several hearing aids, various wheelchairs, and many, many stout sticks, often awkward in skirt around without causing distressing destabilisation. There are cliques, antique Hampstead radicals, linen-jacketed, bow-tied, with vile bour-

What a ridiculous notion! Did not the suit wither away of its own accord in those days, having lost – like capitalism itself – all sense of purpose or occasion?

Yes, there is no denying the overall sense of excitement at the fact that they are all here together again, all these old men with shining eyes, recycling their long-ago triumphs in half-forgotten theoretical skirmishes. So much so, in fact, that it is quite difficult to squeeze one's way past and into the hall itself for the great evening of collective remembrance.

The fights go off and on, on and off. Then on again. And then, all of a sudden, there is a great blast of martial music. Images of defining and heart-stirring proletarian moments, the Paris harricades, the Vietnam war, an image of Liberty, Marx and his family – are flashed no to the vast screen that sits amidst all the rest of the clutter on the stage.

Then something a little odder flashes up, the words "A Newt Was Not Born in a Day". Followed, of course, by two images of a smiling, rosy Red Ken. A tremendous cheer goes up, sticks are thrust vertically into the air, over and over again, like some primitive pumping mechanism.

Then John Saville shuffles on, bald, hawkish in profile, anciently professional, one of the Founding Fathers of the *Socialist Register*.

"Comrades and friends," he begins, and then continues, with inimitable socialist eloquence, gripping the mike like a man lashed in the tiller in a hard gale. "How pleasing it is to see a lot of us against them..."

Saville is a man who occasionally forgets a fact – a name, a date – in that precise instant before he is due to deliver it. No matter. The audience

The actresses look aggressively anti-proletarian. It is at this point that I fall asleep

geois accents and impeccable theatrical positions; there is the harshly laughing man in the mochi-unwashed "Smash the Poll Tax" t-shirt. Those ancient, haunting words set within a workers' blood-red, hammer-and-sickle design.

There is every conceivable variety of that aggressive Sixties addition to the death of fashion: sloppy Joe jumpers, tired, shapeless nylon jackets; those near-hollow, shit-brown tubes that once passed for trousers; the sagging holdalls worn transverse across the chest; loud checked shirts; beer-paunch enhancing T-shirts hung since edging off from white to grey; the grizzled beard; the shirt man in the absurdly long, shabby green corduroy jacket... do I see a suit anywhere?



Julie Christie recites a poem by Pablo Neruda, and (below) the rousing Raised Voices Choir performs

Photographs: Tony Buckingham



seems to be making alarming fist-fucking gestures in the direction of her singers. I close my eyes again, momentarily alarmed.

When I next wake up, as if by magic, Julie Christie is swinging across the stage in a well-tailored blue – blue? blue! – suit and brilliant white tennis shoes, clutching some bits of paper. She makes a characteristically actress meal of a couple of indifferent poems by Pablo Neruda that I have been reading ever since in memory of this precious occasion. One of them is about the Standard Oil Company.

When a photographer, crouching beside the stage, clicks his camera, she swivels in his direction and plonks a gorgeous arm on her hip. Her white shirt is open at the neck, though chastely so. The spots are playing on, maybe teasing with, her oh-so-carefully tousled blonde highlights. At this moment, I feel radical stirrings that I had not expected to feel, not on such a night as this. I think I may need a little urgent medication, Dr Marx.

and Harriet Walter – Junk, by contrast, heads angled just so, be-ringed hands feeling for the jewellery at their necks, blasphemously statuesque and aggressively anti-proletarian – as if they have been too much mindful of their appearances

for the evening's good. As if they are, perhaps, mere hired voices. It is at this point that I fall asleep.

When I wake up, the Raised Voices Choir – two dozen earnest men and women in red T-shirts – is singing a

tremendously rousing piece about some strike at a Massachusetts textile mill. One of the women is clutching a pretty, docile baby to her chest. The female conductor with the wet-look ringlets, spectacles steaming with concentration,

Back to reggae's roots

"WHEN you look at rock, and you look behind rock, you see that there are all those tributaries and streams feeding into it which are the roots of rock: blues, r'n'b, jazz, soul, reggae, country," says Steve Barrow, a man who has spent more than 30 years passionately championing the often ignored but innovative spirit of reggae while battling against musical mediocrity.

With a combination of both humour and disgust, he adds: "When you check Celine Dion, for example, who relates to that? You can't, really, on an emotional level. You think you can, but you're kidding yourself because it's a pastiche emotion, a synthetic emotion. Synthetic emotion is one of the biggest sellers in the world."

Although Steve Barrow compiled over 70 reggae albums for Trojan Records in the late 1980s, it is with Blood and Fire Records that he has really moulded a company that conscientiously reappraises reggae of the 1970s, giving the music its overdue credit as a creative force.

Each release by Blood and Fire, which was founded in 1993, is stunningly packaged and contains a 16-page booklet. The premise of the company is to approach reggae in a scholarly manner, clarify the opaque history of the music and destroy the image of reggae as cheap and disposable. Barrow admits: "We spend more money than a lot of people spend on current rock acts". The label's undeniable success can be gauged by the

host of imitators who copied its idiosyncratic methods.

In the early 1960s, Steve Barrow was a mod, although he insists: "I would never call myself a mod. I was 'modern' in those times, I was a 'modernist'." It was at venues in London such as the Flamingo, the Scene, the Discotheque, the Limbo – "they all had Caribbean names" – that he first heard ska music played by Count Suckle and Duke Vin, two Jamaican DJs who had arrived in England in 1956. He recognised the affinity between the white working class and black American and Jamaican music. "Roots music appeals to the working class. It's music that speaks the truth, whether it's an emotional truth about how bad you're feeling because your woman's left, or a social truth like, you know, 'wake up this morning, got the blues'."

Throughout the Sixties and early Seventies any spare income from his various jobs was spent on records or clothes. At the end of 1975, he began reviewing reggae music for *Black Echoes* and then *Billboard*, *Dub Catcher* and the *NME*, among others. He also assembled ska albums for Island Records and started compiling reggae collections for Trojan in 1988.

He left in 1990, disillusioned, because "they didn't want to do it the way I wanted to do it. I didn't really have the control there." In 1993, Simply Red's management company, So What Arts Ltd, helped him to set up Blood and Fire. Mick Hucknall is a shareholder and, according



Mr Music Steve Barrow (left) and two examples of Blood and Fire's distinctive packaging (below)

Main photograph: Rui Xavier



to Barrow, is involved "in as much as when we put one out he says, 'That's another good one' or 'I like that one' or 'I don't like the Horace Andy cover'."

With the assistance of the innovative designers, Intro, the label tentatively released its first collection, *If DJ Was Your Trade*. The compilation was deliberately unfashionable. "It was to see if we could sell something as unpromising as DJ music, well past its sell-by date, and that there was no real interest in outside of collector's circles, to see if we could package it nicely and

give it a little bit of promotion and see where it took us. And it took off." With contacts in Jamaica, like Bunny Lee, who Barrow describes as "the father of Blood and Fire", the label has continued to unearth rare music, releasing albums based around the consummate work of Glen Brown, King Tubby, Jappa Zukie and Keith Hudson, among others.

With the exception of albums by Horace Andy, The Congos and Burning Spear Blood and Fire releases are predominantly dub (mainly instrumental)

compilations because, as Barrow explains: "Dub is really part of the modern musical vocabulary... The great dub engineers like Tubby, Jammy, Scientist, even 'Scratch', they've taught us to appreciate the drum and bass."

The label's forthcoming release is called *Forward The Bass: Dub From Randy's 1972-1976*, an album that was originally released in very small quantities. Randy's recording studio was created in 1968 by the Chin family, who Steve Barrow describes as "the most innovative Chinese business family in Jamaica". Bob Marley and The Wailers recorded some of their early albums there, with producer Lee 'Scratch' Perry.

Now one of reggae's most energetic authorities, Barrow is not just providing music for the already converted: "There's an old school that just bungs things out... that philosophy isn't for us. We want to sell it to people who don't know it. We know the fans love it, but we want people who have never heard it before, as well, because it's great music. If they're into music they should like it."

Forward The Bass: Dub From Randy's 1972-1976 is released on 25 May.

James Maycock

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Spies, helicopters and high politics

WHEN THE newspaper that Downing Street takes really seriously, the *Sun*, uncharacteristically devoted four pages to Sierra Leone yesterday it didn't take long for the Prime Minister to decide that he needed to stamp his authority on events. Mr Blair tried to dismiss the controversy over the role played by British officials in the coup in Sierra Leone as a lot of "hooha". Behind this dismissal Mr Blair probably recognises that the Sierra Leone affair is the most substantial crisis to affect his administration, with much less froth than previous squalls. How much lasting damage will be done depends on how events will run, and this resolves itself into the question of Robin Cook's survival.

Mr Cook wanted to hide behind the Customs and Excise and Foreign Office enquiries, which will take weeks, maybe months, to complete. He obviously hoped that these would buy him some political time. They haven't. This story has a sex appeal about it with its high politics, spies, helicopters and "dogs of war". *Hansard meets Dr No*. Plenty of the players involved seem willing to provide momentum for it. It will not go away.

The Prime Minister recognised that he, Mr Cook, and the rest of the government had nothing to look forward to but a long debilitating summer of fresh questions, revelations, and harassment from the press. He also saw that the credibility of observers was being stretched by Mr Cook's claims that ministers had no knowledge of what was being done by their officials. Hence the decision to take the handling of the affair out of the hands of his Foreign Secretary and his dramatic change of defence: "Don't let us forget that what was happening was that the UN and the UK were both trying to help the democratic regime restore its position from an illegal military coup. They were quite right to do it." This sounds dangerously close to a preparation of the ground for the time when he has to admit that official involvement or ministerial knowledge were all justified by a moral, indeed ethical, cause. This was the defence that could have been deployed at the very beginning of the crisis. Mr Blair would be loath to sack Mr Cook, but he must be getting tired of the presentational disasters.

Israel's peace is in Clinton's interests

THE NEXT few days are a defining moment for Bill Clinton's presidency. Forget Monica Lewinsky, and his term of office has been associated with remarkable economic prosperity, although that is due as much to what he has not done – not mucked up a working formula – as what he has.

His big chance comes with Israel. Mr Clinton has no more elections to fight. He has no further need of Democratic Party money-bags. Now is the time for him to consider his place in the history books and – for once – secure the breakthrough needed by treating Israel like any other foreign policy question. The deciding factor has to be the interests of the United States. And they require some kind of regional settlement in the Middle East, which depends on progress in negotiation between Israel and the Palestinian proto-state headed by Yasser Arafat. The only way forward now is Israeli concession, most immediately on the volume of West Bank land to be relinquished. The Netanyahu government won't move unless Washington pushes, and hard.

It is not a question of a president having to face down the pro-Israel lobby that has been so powerful in Congress and White House. It is a matter of the President of the United States equating his country's long-run interests with those of Israel at peace and arguing – to domestic audiences – that these interests are not represented by the stand now being taken by this prime minister, whose electoral mandate is after all so slim.

Israel's dependence on American goodwill remains axiomatic. The Netanyahu administration has budgets to make, a central banker to live with, exporters to keep sweet. Israeli politics are not a field of sweet reason, to be sure. But the more extreme the response of Israeli fundamentalists, the more President Clinton will be able to prove to Americans – including the Jewish community – just how alien Israeli zealotry has become.

He must make clear that threatening to cut off supplies serves no cause but Israel's own: there is no policy – no policy – that does not involve at some stage accommodation with and hence minimal trust in a Palestinian political entity with its own security responsibilities. If Israel has to be forced into it, Mr Clinton earns his stature.

Youth's puerile hero

DOES "young Britain" really see Chris Evans as the best person to represent its interests?

It is, if true, a distressing revelation. The *Industrial Society*, who brought us this news, tell us that young people cite a number of reasons as to why Mr Evans would be a good Minister for Youth. He is said to have a reputation for speaking out. It is, though, a pity that this is based on elevating the F-word into a marketing tool. He has, we are asked to believe, a great sense of humour. Fine, if you want to encourage children to poke fun at "ugly" people. Most importantly, he is supposed to be "in touch" with young people. He has made sure he is. His comedy is puerile – trivial, immature and childish.

Chris Evans is certainly dedicated to self-propaganda. He is famous, tedious about his wealth and notoriously rude. But is Mr Evans really the choice of youth? Let us look more closely at the evidence. Just 600 young people were polled, of whom only 50 plumped for Evans. It may well be that the poll is as unreliable as Chris Evans himself.

HOWARD TAKES TO THE MORAL HIGH GROUND....



Sandline in Sierra Leone

Sir: News of Sandline's involvement in Sierra Leone has become so embroiled in political point-scoring that there is a danger of allowing hypocrisy and hubris to rule the day.

A year ago the world was virtually unanimous in wanting the Kormora regime out and President Kabbah reinstated. Anarchy reigned, but no western power would intervene militarily except to rescue its own citizens from the chaos. The President and Leader of the Opposition fled to exile.

If, as alleged, it was our High Commissioner who co-ordinated the efforts of Sandline and the Nigerians to successful effect, then he will surely have a much greater influence on good governance in Sierra Leone than if he had limited himself to giving cocktail parties in the hush for the exiles. The man deserves to be promoted, not pilloried.

The focus of any inquiry should be on ensuring that Sierra Leone's diamond-based economy has not been mortgaged unreasonably to either of the "liberators" and that in future mercenaries can be held internationally accountable for their actions in territories which lack effective government.

JOHN E. TRICKS
Credition, Devon

Sir: Your leading article (9 May) defends Robin Cook's alleged actions with regard to Sierra Leone and asks for "more openness". From your comments it would appear that the UK government should be able to sponsor covertly any armed intervention (regardless of UN/EU sanctions) against "illegal" regimes so long as the minister is "open" about it.

The moral question of whether the UK should have been involved in restoring the "legal" regime is irrelevant; sanctions were imposed to try to stem the fighting and bloodshed within the country. The Foreign Office's apparent decision to throw more petrol onto the bonfire cannot be regarded as a serious attempt to restore the legitimate government.

Two "ethical" questions that immediately spring to mind over this affair:

LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

1. If the British government was so confident that the rightful administration had to be restored to power in Sierra Leone, why didn't they use the UK's regular armed forces instead of covertly hiring a group of mercenaries to do some gun-running against UN sanctions?

2. What is the difference between breaking an arms embargo on Sierra Leone and breaking one on Iraq or the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia?

P. WILLIAMS
Limassol, Cyprus

Protect the unborn child

Sir: The Court of Appeal may have, for the time being, resolved the legal issues relating to the case of Ms S ("Mothers win right to refuse Caesareans", 8 May) but it totally disregarded the ethical issues, which will not go away.

Consider the following scenarios. In the first, a woman goes into labour at eight months but the previously healthy baby shows signs of severe distress and a Caesarean section is advised to save the baby's life. The mother refuses, on the grounds that it will interfere with the natural process of birth which she has always wanted. Several hours later the baby is born dead. In the second, a woman goes into labour at eight months and delivers a healthy baby which she does not want. Before it can start to breathe, she smothered it and is later charged with murder.

These cases are extreme but they can and do occur, and if they throw up issues which the law cannot deal with in a logical and morally responsible way, then the law needs to be changed. A mature fetus is a sentient being – aware of its surroundings, able to hear and feel pain. Surely it is due some protection in a civilised society.

Professor RICHARD OLIVER FRCP
SUSAN OLIVER RSCN
St Andrews, Fife

Don't rewrite history

Sir: Anything which makes history more attractive to young people ought to be welcomed, but the latest EC-funded CD-Rom appears to confuse making the past accessible with sanitising it ("Swashbuckling Vikings are written out of history", 9 May).

In addition to pointing out the hardly surprising fact that Viking raiders had families and did not always eat well, the curator of Denmark's national museum, Anna Pedersen, apparently thinks the Vikings "have been victims of a bad press... They might have pointed out that a lot of the places they took over were easy to attack".

This type of rewriting of history makes the subject absurd. It could even become sinister. Imagine a 20th-century history CD-Rom explaining to schoolchildren that the Wehrmacht has had a bad press – after all, a lot of places Hitler took over did not put up any resistance, including Denmark.

MARK ALMOND
Oxford

Capital cat

Sir: Now that London is to have an elected mayor, would it not be an ideal opportunity to revive the historic tradition of Dick Whittington and have a cat as well? We had Humphrey at Number 10, but his role and status were never clear. Was he a civil servant – perhaps the first alderman?

Let us have a democratically elected, publicly accountable cat for the capital and for the millennium. I'm ready to kick off the "Yes" campaign with the slogan "Bring Back the Cat!"

JOHN LAMPER
Wareham, Dorset

Police presence?

Sir: David Blunkett's idea for the police to help return truants to school (report, 11 May) is, on the face of it, a good idea. However, when did you last see a bobby on the beat?

PETER BRINTON
Headteacher, Roskear School
Camborne, Cornwall

Treating depression

Sir: In Hamish McRae's analysis of the future of the pharmaceutical industry (Comment, 6 May) he unhelpfully compares Prozac, an antidepressant drug, with Viagra, a new treatment for impotence, implying that both are treatments with dubious medical justification for non-serious disorders.

Whilst there is obviously more to the treatment of depression than medications such as Prozac, the suggestion that this disabling yet treatable condition is somehow medically unimportant must not go unchallenged.

Dr RICHARD PRETTYMAN
Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry for the Elderly
University of Leicester

The best way to vote

Sir: Donald MacIntyre suggests (Comment, 8 May) that the Alternative Vote (AV) offers a middle course on electoral reform which should be supported by Liberal Democrats.

AV does not provide for proportionality. As Donald MacIntyre says, in 1997 AV would have produced an even less proportional result than first-past-the-post. A two-stage approach to electoral reform with AV being introduced for the next election and top-up lists being added after boundary changes is also suggested (AV-plus). This is likely to be more costly than a one-step reform and may lead to an increased

number of MPs if proportionality is to be achieved. More MPs would be both unpopular and unjustified.

Liberal Democrats favour the single transferable vote (STV) as the system best able to meet the terms of reference of the Jenkins Commission. STV could be introduced at the next election without a lengthy Boundary Commission review by simply aggregating existing seats based on natural communities such as cities. STV maximises voter choice, allows preferential voting and could maintain the constituency link by the use of multi-member natural constituencies.

AV is not a proportional system, and does not therefore meet the remit of the Jenkins Commission. AV-plus may be more proportional than AV, but there is a system that better meets the remit of the Commission in STV.

ROBERT MACLENNAN MP
(Cairness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, Lib Dem)
House of Commons
London SW1
The writer is Liberal Democrat
Constitutional Affairs Spokesman

Man bites dog. But only in self-defence



MILES KINGTON

A MOST curious trial is going on in a London court at the moment, in which a postman is accused of biting a dog. The action is being brought under the little-used Domestic Animals Protection Act (1923) which was originally passed to stamp out cruelty in the RSPCA, but which is thought never to have been previously used against a postman.

Here is an extract from the fascinating proceedings.

Counsel: Now, Mr Watt, you are a postman?
Postman: I am.
Counsel: I believe that one of the hazards of a postman's life is canine assault.
Postman: It is.
Counsel: And what precautions can be taken against it?
Postman: Many things have been tried. Dog-proof trousers, anti-dog spray, a stout stick, a whistle designed to repel dogs...

Counsel: Which one of these measures have you adopted?
Postman: None.

Counsel: So what do you do when faced with a hostile dog?
Postman: I bring my own dog into play.

Counsel: Ah! You own a dog of your own?
Postman: That is correct. Early in my career as a postman, after several episodes of being bitten by dogs, I decided to fight fire with fire, and to acquire my own fierce dog.

Accordingly, I bought a bulldog which I took on my rounds with me. Whenever I entered a garden or property with a hostile dog on the premises, I would bring Profumo...

Counsel: Profumo?
Postman: Yes. That is the name of the bulldog.

Judge: Most unusual name, Mr Watt. Was it named after John Profumo?

Postman: Who, sir?

Judge: Never mind. Carry on.

Postman: If I were faced with a fierce dog, I would bring in Profumo and set him on the opposition. That always did the trick.

Counsel: So Profumo was ever worsted in battle?

Postman: No, sir, though he once fought a close draw with a mastiff in Willesden, called Rah Butler.

Counsel: Now, tell us what happened on the morning of 17 July last year.

Postman: The day dawned bright and early, though clouds started to form before half past five. I had a boiled egg for breakfast, with two pieces of toast...

Counsel: I don't mean everything that happened on that morning. Just what is relevant to this case.

Postman: Ah. Well, at about 9.40am I entered the garden of 4 Macmillan Road, carrying a pile of letters. I did not take Profumo with me, as I knew there to be no dog at No 4, and I tied Profumo up outside.

side. What I did not know was that over the weekend the owners of No 4 had bought a spaniel. It was not trained, and attacked me. Without Profumo to aid me, I was panicked and without thinking I did what Profumo would have done.

Counsel: You sank your teeth in the spaniel?

Postman: Yes.

Counsel: Causing injuries which have produced a limp to this day?

Postman: No. I was not hurt at all.

Counsel: I am thinking of the dog.

Postman: That is what most people do. Nobody thinks of the poor postman.

Judge: I dread to ask this question, but what was the name of the spaniel?

Postman: I believe it was Cliveden, sir.

Judge: Good Lord. Carry on.

Counsel: Do you really think you were justified in attacking the dog?

Postman: I did not attack him. I defended

ed myself. Those of you who have never been a postman do not realise under what constant threat we are. I have been attacked by cats, by birds, by barbed wire, by trees, by householders who were furious that the expected letter had not arrived, by householders who were furious that the expected bill HAD arrived... On one occasion I was even attacked by a female snake. Small wonder if occasionally we give way to our human nature and retaliate. Is a postman not also human?

If you bite us, do we not bite? (Huge applause from public gallery, which is crowded with postmen.)

Judge: I probably should not ask this, but was the snake called Christine?

Postman: No, sir.

Judge: Thank heaven for that.

Postman: It was called Mandy, sir.

The case continues.

Follow me into the living world of obituary reading



ANDREAS
WHITTAM SMITH

FROM TIME to time, it is the parts of newspapers that have nothing to do with the news that give the most pleasure. For some, this will be the crossword; for me it is the obituaries. I know that many readers skip over them.

The pleasures are very much the same as reading a good biography or novel. Obituary notices are often well written, particularly, if I may say so, in *The Independent*, where they are signed. Yet obituaries can be critical. Thus *The Daily Telegraph's* recent notice of Sir Alan Glyn, a former Tory MP, noted that he was "occasionally over-fussy", "too fond of the sound of his own voice" and that his constituency party had expected greater things of him. This caused Tam Dalyell MP to try to set the record straight in Saturday's *Independent*. "I fear," he sniffed, "that most current members of the House of Commons will remember Alan Glyn as a creaky, occasionally cantankerous old buffer. This is a pity."

Obituary notices transport you into a life you have over lived and perhaps could never have imagined. Take this account of the background of a Jesuit priest, Father Philip Caraman, who has recently died: "His father was an Armenian banker from Smyrna (now Izmir) who had come to Loodoo to set up in business importing dried fruit from the Levant. His mother was of Italian descent. Both were devout Catholics; they had their own private chapel, and of their nine children two became priests and two nuns." These lines might have been taken from the opening page of a 19th-century novel. In fact, Father Caraman is remembered because of his literary gifts and friendships with writers such as Evelyn Waugh. He received both Edith Sitwell and Muriel Spark in the Roman Catholic Church, but later, when he was sent to Norway, he failed to make a single convert in five years.

A staple of obituary notices these days is the war hero. The brave young men and women of the 1940s are now in their late seventies or eighties. Few of them had been in the services before the war. They were volunteers or conscripts. Much like today, they started out in life as young lawyers or trainee doctors. But then – and this is why it is worth reading accounts of their lives – they suddenly found themselves at war for five years. Afterwards they generally went back to what they had been doing in peace-time and carried on as if nothing had happened.

Their war exploits alone earn them full obituaries. Mr Thomas Simpson, who recently died aged 80, resumed his law studies in 1944 in his native Australia. But it is what he achieved in 1943 and 1944, in his mid-twenties, flying in bomber squadrons over Germany – once making 13 passes above the Dortmund-Ems Canal at only 150ft in fog, always under attack – that earned him a DFC

and a sizeable notice in the *Daily Telegraph*. The article was headlined with his war-time rank, Flight Lieutenant "Tammy" Simpson.

Almost as frequently as you find the life of a war hero, you read about musicians of the same period, often somebody who played with Benny Goodman or Glen Miller. Indeed, Mel Powell, who recently died in Los Angeles aged 75, was due to travel with Glenn Miller and his Army Airforce Orchestra on the latter's fatal flight in December 1944, but was pulled off the plane at the last minute.

I confess I knew nothing of Mel Powell, but this is another service obituary notices perform: they educate. I learn Powell was one of a small group whose influence "was to permeate the music of the next 50 years". He was "one of the most broadly talented musicians of the century". And, indeed, he seems to have been. He was with Goodman for only five years. After the war he went to Hollywood but found "writing a glissando when the mouse ran up the clock" rather boring. And so, to a remarkable switch, he went to Yale, studied composition under Hindemith, became a full professor and was renowned for his mastery of 12-tone technique; his work was performed in concert halls around the world.

But it is the recent accounts of the life of a lesser, British musician, Syd Lawrence, also a devotee of swing music, that I have found the most enthralling. His great gift as a band leader was in imitating the style of Miller. He seems to have taken his Miller pastiche to such a high level that the Miller family tried to sue him, unsuccessfully in the event.

His beginnings – born near Chester and playing a cornet in a brass band – chime with my own family background, although there the resemblance ends. After the war he got

Obituary notices
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jobs in Loodoo, but he couldn't stand the South East. He returned to Chester and, finding no work as a musician, started selling vacuum cleaners. Then he got into the BBC Northern Dance Orchestra and he was under way again. He was over part of the jazz aristocracy; he learned everything from the gramophone records of famous performers. But he found a niche by creating an orchestra which satisfied nostalgia for the music of the 1940s just when rock'n'roll seemed about to obliterate everything that had gone before.

Reading obituaries shows what is possible. In the past two weeks you could have learned what it was like to have started out as the child of Armenian parents living in Loodoo. Or to have suddenly found yourself at war. (I ask myself: would I have acquitted myself so well?) Musicians, we learn, can switch genres successfully. And even a life devoted to copying a past master – perhaps painting nothing but Constable-style landscapes – can bring pleasure to a lot of people.

Unions should recognise that a brighter future awaits them outside New Labour



ANNE
MCELVY

IT IS almost a relief to see the renegade left hoist the red flag in the trade unions. Having been castrated in Parliament, sidelined in their council heartlands by Lib Dem protest votes and mysteriously quiet (or gagged and bound) in local Labour parties, they had to be somewhere. The disappearance of Dave and Deirdre Spart was getting suspicious.

Now we know where they went. The Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic Union is agitating inside the public service union. The closeness of "democratic" and "fighting" betrays the twin influences of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party and the dog-ends of Militant. In the train drivers' Aslef, the General Secretary's job went to a Scargillite. The Communication Workers' Union, has shifted to the left by electing Derek Hodgson, a loyal Old Labour man, but not likely to be found discussing the Third Way with Tony Blair over a plate of Hob Nobs at Number 10.

Now that the ambiguities of Opposition can no longer be preserved, New Labour treats the unions like aged, faintly unsavoury relatives whose existence is acknowledged by infrequent, guarded contacts. Mr Blair was never going to allow a resurgence of union power in Britain. He might as well have post-dated his own electoral death warrant. Hence, the setting of the minimum wage at the lowest end of expectations.

As for union recognition, the details will be hedged around with enough barriers and conditions to defeat a citadel: the moderates will be accused of having failed their members, and the left will profit further. This is largely the fault of the TUC for making recognition the keystone of its relations with a Labour government.

The best advice in such a predicament comes from Marshall Foch in 1914: "My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat: situation excellent. I shall



This is no time for song: John Monks (centre), General Secretary of the TUC, at the 1997 conference

entertain a vision as obsolete as Lederhosen and oom-pah bands. The composition of post-war Germany is under attack and will not survive the next five years in its present form. In the East, employees regularly vote to bypass collective bargaining in order to maximise jobs. There is no future for British trade unions in aping a failing German consensus.

Mr Monks is credited with coining the phrase "New Unionism" to reflect a shift away from militancy and towards co-operation. Beyond the name, innovations are few. The fatal flaw in the psyche of the unions is an abiding desire to win rights from government and wrest concessions from employers, instead of asking themselves what they might do themselves to stop the slide in membership and ensure that companies value them as assets.

New Labour, meanwhile, is snipping one strand of its union ties after another. Funding of the election campaign by the brothers dropped from 90 per cent in 1992 to 25 per cent in 1997. Less than a quarter of the party's annual funding comes from them, as opposed to half three years ago.

The institutional role of the unions delivers far more to Labour in terms of funding and

benefits in kind than it does to the trade unions. But they are astonishingly slow to see that they are being taken for a ride. If the unions put a fraction of the effort into widening their services to members that they put into arcane arguments about the impact of percentage thresholds for recognition, they would be better placed to stem the exodus of workers. The unions will only prosper, like any other voluntarist association, if they offer people good reasons to be members.

In an uncertain world, they could begin to do so by rediscovering the mutualism of their co-operative roots. Blue-collar workers are most vulnerable to the decline in public services. They often lack the time, the means and the skills to adapt the way they plan their savings and other provisions to rapidly changing circumstances. Unions that offer sound independent financial and mortgage advice and hammer out good insurance and private pension deals can be an asset to companies as well as workers.

On a wider scale, Unison – even the bits of it not in the grip of permanent revolutionaries – is short-sighted to reject the introduction of private funding in the health service. Its members suffer from the over-burdened

NHS as much as anyone else. Ultimately, there will be private-public partnership. They might as well get used to it now and try to influence the terms.

Strategically, the unions' position is weak and likely to grow weaker unless they change. Does it not occur to their leaders that they should make their own plans to ditch the Labour party first? If Mr Blair is aiming to create a broad centre-left coalition, possibly by a change in the voting system, the unions are in a very strong position to make ad hoc alliances elsewhere.

The Liberal Democrats – more collectivist in their thinking than much of New Labour – would be the obvious place to start. In a devolved Scotland, there would be a rich seam in making common cause with the galloping SNP.

Truly independent trade unions would have far more chance of influencing Government than those formally, but ineffectually, linked to Labour. They should grasp the chance to reinvent themselves as a campaigning, supportive network, ensuring minimum conditions for the dignity and well-being of working people – in other words, the reason they were formed in the first place.

Posh luvvie projects look for an alternative to public subsidy



ROSIE
MILLARD

APPARENTLY, Keat is a desert. The county foodily known as the Garden of England should be rechristened the Gobi of England. "Artistically speaking, of course," said the eminent barrister John Macdonald QC, who is also chairman of Kent Opera.

Kent Opera has something of a chequered past. Its Arts Council grant was abolished a few years ago, whereupon, after a huge outcry, it abolished itself. Now it plans to ascend from the ashes, an oasis in the desert that is Kent.

"Our next production is Monteverdi's *Orfeo*," announced Mr Macdonald, at a champagne-fuelled press conference in his elegant Lincoln's Inn chambers. "But as

we return from the underworld, we will not be looking back to see whether our former funding bodies will be following us." He paused, to coax our rather slower minds to get the joke. "We are not afraid of helping ourselves."

Kent Opera, like so many other arts bodies across the country, has realised it is pointless bleating for subsidy. During the Tory years, when they weren't chanting "Thatcher! Out!", arts companies were forever bemoaning about more subsidy. However, as soon as Thatcher and her gang were indeed ousted, everything all went quiet on the funding appeal front. For arts people knew that al-

though Conservatives weren't exactly spendthrifts, they were more likely to wave through dough for posh luvvie projects than Labour, historically nervous of arts subsidy.

The Government is thrilled to support schemes such as Arts For Everyone, which extends that magical concept of "access". But money for excellence might also mean – dare I say it – elitism? Forget it. High culture is simply out welcome on the grant application form.

So, Kent Opera has dumped the begging bowl and come up with a sort of Blairist stakeholding number. You, the opera buff, donate £100. In return you get one free ticket and the sneaky gratification

that you are helping the highly un-PC art form of opera. It is rather like sponsoring an elephant at Loodoo Zoo, except you get a selection of arias rather than a waving trunk.

The war artist John Keane has had the same idea. I received a letter from him the other day asking for £100 to help with his commercial rates bill; in return you receive a limited-edition print. Keane has written to 60 art lovers and had cheques from more than half, including people like Harold Pinter.

What inspired self-help this is, one thinks. Except that you can only pull this stunt once. Keane's rates will go on and on, but how much wall space has Pinter got? He

may be a fan, but does he want a Keane artwork every year for the next decade?

And exclusive private support has its own artistic thorns. Kent Opera may well build up a brigade of opera lovers thirsting for decent shows outside Loodoo. However, in return, the company formerly headed by that iconoclast Michael Tippett may have to put on productions that sponsors will want to use their freebies on.

And because people are happiest with familiarity, traditional operas will always have the edge. But endless productions of *Figaro* or *La Traviata* will not turn Kent into the artistic hotbed it has the potential to become.

Homeboys

WHILE charity begins at home, surely crime prevention should start at the Home Office. Perhaps this was Liberal Democratic MP Ronnie Fearn's motivation when he asked Home Secretary Jack Straw last month for a list of all the equipment stolen from his department over the past five years. The list makes amazing reading. About £275,000 worth of computers, IT equipment, vehicles, camcorders and other goods have fallen off the back of the Home Office lorry since 1993, with by far the worst losses taking place between 1995-97, during Michael Howard's regime. Pandora was particularly struck by the theft of so much gardening equipment, including a tractor, lawnmower and brush cutter, plus many power tools. Who are

all these people who seem to be confusing the Home Office with their local Homebase DIY stores and why can't they be stopped?

Lottery landmine

WHAT do Joan Armatrading, Tim Hartman, Will Self, Linford Christie, Sir Terence Conran and David Hockney have in common? They are all contributors of "celebrity hand prints and photographs" to a book sponsored by Camelot on behalf of something called the Handlines Project. A reception is being held on 1 June at a Mayfair art gallery; its stated purpose is to support the ban on landmines. Oddly, the invitation was put out on a Camelot letterhead addressed – not to this newspaper's arts editor – but

PANDORA

to our political correspondent. Surely, landmines are a political issue, but Pandora wishes that Camelot's cynical support for the late Princess Diana's most publicised charity effort could be buried 6ft deep.

Deep blue

EVERYONE'S escape from relegation out of the Premiership had at least two employees of the Government in a celebratory mood yesterday. Peter Kilfoyle at the Cabinet Office and Joe Irvin, John Prescott's special advisor, are both zealous Toffee supporters.

Tory druggies

YESTERDAY'S debate in the House of Commons on the second reading of the Competition Bill ostensibly pitted Labour's DTI minister, Margaret Beckett, against her Tory opposite, John Redwood. Behind the scenes, however, the real conflict is entirely on the Tory benches: between Redwood and Archie Norman, MP and vice-chairman of the Conservative Party. At issue is Redwood's wish to protect the nation's small pharmacies against a move by national supermarket chains which want to sell over-the-counter non-prescription drugs at a discounted price. The supermarket which pioneered this commercial strategy is Asda, whose former chairman is, of course, Archie Norman.

Star wars

PERHAPS young Hollywood hotshots would be wise to avoid the mean streets of Manhattan. In recent months, director Quentin Tarantino has allegedly been involved in several bar brawls in New York that have resulted in multi-million-dollar lawsuits being lodged against the former video shop clerk. Now Leonardo DiCaprio has been an uncomfortably close witness to a street fight involving another actor and a screenwriter outside fashionable Morgan's Hotel. The key evidence – a security videotape – is being withheld by the nearby Polish Consulate on the grounds of diplomatic immunity. Pandora was relieved to hear that DiCaprio was back in Hollywood this weekend, looking for a suitable Bel Air mansion.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

CWC looks serious now

IT WILL take some more time, but Cable & Wireless Communications may yet turn itself from the ugly duckling of the telecoms sector into something resembling an elegant swan.

When the business was thrown together through the merger of long-distance operator Mercury and three cable companies last year, it seemed doubtful that CWC would ever be a credible competitor to the likes of British Telecom.

Thirteen months, thousands of redundancies and a £200m restructuring charge later, that proposition no longer seems so laughable. Although CWC's poor network means it is losing ground in the business market, the company has embarked on a £400m upgrade which should enable it to face the competition on level terms.

Meanwhile Head Start, a cheap package combining cable television and cable telephony, has proved popular with residential customers. Penetration rates have risen from 27 to 29 per cent, while over half of those customers now take both the television and telecoms services, compared with 47 per cent last year. Churn rates – the proportion of customers cancelling their service – did rise but this is at least partly down to CWC weeding out persistent late payers.

Looking ahead, there is digital television. Cable TV has, until now, been a carbon copy of the offerings from the likes of Sky. In the digital era, however, CWC will be able to offer all the 200 channels planned by Sky while also offering access to the internet – through the television – at many times the speed currently available. What's more, CWC subscribers won't have to fork out £200 for a set-top box, as they will with other digital television services.

This is a long-term prospect. Yet Graham Wallace, CWC's chief executive, is bullish enough to promise 15 per cent revenue growth this year. Add in widening margins as the benefits of restructuring flow through and growth prospects look good. That said, the shares have had a fantastic run, more than doubling in value since last November. They put on 7.5p to 451.5p yesterday, and now trade on a multiple of 33 times this year's forecast earnings. Not cheap, but still a good long-term bet.

DCC keeps in focus

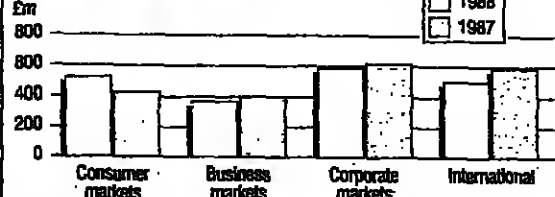
"CONGLOMERATE" has been a dirty word in the City for the last few years. The sector's rating has plunged and in-

Cable & Wireless: At a glance

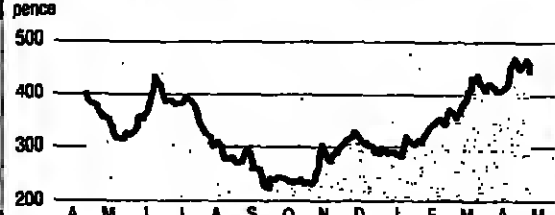
Market value: £5.72bn, share price 451.5p (+7.5p)

Trading record Year to 31 March	1997	1998
Turnover (£bn)	2.04	2.28
Pre-tax profits (£m)	80	(49)
Earnings per share (p)	5.4	(3.3)
Dividends per share (p)	10.1	4.9

Revenue breakdown



Share price



vestment bankers, who never like to miss the chance of bringing in new fees, have managed to break up almost everything in sight.

So it is not surprising that Dublin-based DCC went out of its way yesterday to label itself a focused company, even though it just happens to have four separate divisions which little in common with each other. Jim Flavin the group's chief executive, who has been building the company up since 1976, also claimed DCC was not just driven by acquisitions like an old-fashioned conglomerate and has made its mark by achieving strong organic growth.

But perhaps the main thing that separates DCC from other conglomerates is its share price, which has risen sharply over the last 12 months.

Turnover in the year to the end of March rose 15 per cent to £2,280m and profits after excluding exceptional items in the previous year rose 16 per cent to £36.7m.

DCC Sercom's computer hardware and software distribution businesses enjoyed a 31 per cent rise in sales although margins suffered slightly as a result of a changing mix of business. DCC Energy enjoyed a rebound in profits and margins from the distribution of liquefied petroleum gas. DCC Foods is poised to supply its Kelkin brand of healthfoods into the UK market, while the smallest division, DCC Healthcare strengthened its grip on the small but profitable business supplying scooters and wheelchairs to help the affluent elderly get about.

Profits beat forecasts and analysts' predictions for the current year have edged up to £4.1m. The shares rose 15p to 451.5p yesterday, putting them on a forward p/e of 16. After the strong run that looks high enough for the time being.

Game on for float

GAME, the computer games retailer that is coming to the stock market next month, has timed its flotation well. Its debut will be buoyed by the terrific run of Electronics Boutique, the only directly comparable quoted company, whose shares have tripled in the last year. Both companies have been growing rapidly and this is likely to result in Game's shares being priced at a premium to the retail sector, valuing Game at £120m-£140m.

Game has larger stores than its main rival, though fewer of them. However, it has ambitious plans to increase its portfolio from the current 61 to around 120 in the medium term.

Game sells console hardware from the likes of Sony, Sega and Nintendo as well as software and other accessories.

Its approach seems to be working. The company's pathfinder prospectus yesterday forecasts pre-tax profits of £7.1m in the year to 3 May compared with just £400,000 in the previous year. Sales are forecast to have jumped from £52.3m to £77.6m.

With 13 per cent of the UK entertainment software market which is growing fast on the back of expanding PC sales, the company is well placed to grow further.

This is expected to be reflected in the company's rating, which is likely to be at a premium to the retail sector average of 17. Given that the float is a placing with institutions and there is no intermediaries offer, much will depend not just on the pricing but the shares' performance on the first day of dealings. Even so, they are worth a look.

Smurfit plans \$4.3bn merger with Stone

By Clifford German

IRISH-BASED Jefferson Smurfit yesterday triggered a major rationalisation move in the paperboard and packaging industries. Jefferson Smurfit Group (JSG) will merge its 46 per cent-owned US subsidiary Jefferson Smurfit Corporation (JSC) with the loss-making Chicago-based Stone Container Corporation to form Smurfit-Stone Container Corporation, a listed US company with a market capitalisation of \$4.3bn (£2.6bn), in which Jefferson Smurfit will own a 34 per cent stake.

The combined company would create one of the world's largest manufacturers of paperboard and paper-based packaging products, with annual sales of around \$8bn and operations in the US

and Europe, the chairman and CEO of JSG, Michael Smurfit, said yesterday. Mr Smurfit will become non-executive chairman of the new company, Roger Stone will be chief executive officer, while JSC will provide the deputy chief executive and chief financial officer.

It also starts life with massive combined debts of \$6.4bn. After shouldering heavy interest charges of \$650m, JSC barely broke even and Stone Container lost \$593m last year. The merger will create operational savings of \$350m a year. The group also intended to sell \$2.5bn worth of assets, including the Canadian newsprint and pulp mills within the next 18 months, Mr Smurfit said yesterday. He expects to realise assets at a reasonable price, on the grounds that the depressed market in paper and pack-

aging industries caused by the creation of excess capacity has ended and the value of assets is beginning to rise.

The newly merged company made a good strategic fit, and was expected to be "earnings accretive and cash-flow positive" in 1999, the company's statement said. The North American container board operations of JSC and Stone are complementary, and the merged company has substantial manufacturing capacity in Germany and Belgium where JSG is weak, and is less important in France and Spain, where JSG has substantial operations.

The deal will focus the business on packaging materials, its core competence, the company said yesterday. Together, JSG and the new company will be the market leader in North America.

Latin America, and Europe, with 11 per cent of global container board sales.

As part of the deal Jefferson Smurfit will buy in 20 million shares in its subsidiary from a leveraged fund for \$500m, at an average price of \$25 a share, a substantial premium to the market price, reducing the fund's stake from 30 per cent of JSC to 9 per cent in the enlarged company. Existing investors in JSC and Stone Container will hold roughly equal stakes in the remaining 57 per cent of the enlarged company.

Shares in Jefferson Smurfit Corporation rose \$3 to \$22 yesterday, Stone Container shares climbed \$1 to \$21 and Jefferson Smurfit Group shares in London also rose 14.5p to a new peak of 238.5p.

Shareholders feel the pain of Bolton's fall



The Bolton bench feel the agony as Chelsea send the club back to the First Division

By Andrew Yates

THE growing financial gulf between football clubs in the Premier League and those in the First Division was thrown into sharp focus again yesterday when shares in Burnden Leisure collapsed after Bolton Wanderers, the club it owns, crashed out of the game's top flight.

Bolton Wanderers' disastrous 2-0 defeat at the hands of Chelsea at the weekend convinced the team to the First Division after only one season back in the Premiership. The result saw £6m wiped off the

stock market value of Burnden Leisure yesterday. The shares tumbled by more than a fifth to 17p, down 5p, as the City anticipated a sharp drop in profits next season.

Bolton will miss out on millions of pounds worth of television income which they would have been entitled to in the Premier League as part of a lucrative contract with BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

Gate revenues and merchandise sales are also bound to suffer in the First Division, with the lack of high profile opponents likely to attract smaller crowds.

The defeat for Bolton was particularly cruel for shareholders, who have already had a terrible season. Burnden's shares have slumped from a peak of 62.5p last year. They had begun to recover as hopes of Premier league survival gained ground, only for investors to see Bolton fall at the final hurdle by losing their last match of the season.

However Bolton, which have recently built a new state-of-the-art stadium, still have a strong local support and analysts believe the club could still be profitable in the First Division.

Pearson confirms interest in buying parts of Viacom

THE MEDIA group Pearson yesterday confirmed it was considering opportunities arising out of the US group Viacom's plans to sell its publishing business. Pearson did not give details but the industry expects the British company, which publishes the *Financial Times*, to bid for part of Viacom's Simon & Schuster subsidiary. In a brief statement Pearson said it "confirms that it is considering the opportunities arising from Viacom Inc's planned disposal of some of its publishing businesses." Viacom's disposals is expected raise between \$4bn and \$5bn. Analysts said that a purchase of Simon & Schuster would make Pearson one of the world's biggest educational publishers. Pearson is a major player in the US educational market through its Addison Wesley Longman unit. Pearson's share price was down 7p at 938p.

BA scorns Branson allegations

BRITISH AIRWAYS yesterday hit back at claims by Richard Branson, the boss of Virgin Atlantic, that its reward schemes for travel agents were anti-competitive. Virgin has lodged a complaint with the European Commission which is investigating BA's practice of paying agents a higher rate of commission they more flights they sell. Peter White, BA's director of sales, said such schemes were standard practice. "To suggest, as Richard Branson does, that our reward schemes are anti-competitive, is hypocritical," he said. "Virgin uses similar schemes and Mr Branson knows it."

Hambros insurance arm sold

HAMBROS, the UK financial services group, has sold its 52 per cent stake in Hambros Insurance Services (HIS) to Lindey Moir Group of Canada for £45m. It has already sold its banking unit to Societe Generale of France and most of its remaining activities to Investec of South Africa. Separately, shareholders approved the demerger of Hambros Countrywide, the estate agency.

Cox Plant sold for £49.6m

ANDREW SYKES Group, the air conditioning and heating specialist, has agreed to purchase Cox Plant Hire from logistics and hire group Transport Development Group for £49.6m. TDG said the sale was in line with its plan to refocus the business on core logistics markets announced on 23 February. The group's strategy review aims to return funds of up to £109m to shareholders.

Senior buys into Brazil

SENIOR Engineering has agreed to buy three Brazilian companies for about £12m in cash. Senior Engineering said the proforma consolidated sales of the three Sao Paulo-based companies were £11.8m and pre-tax profits were £2.3m. Delistaterra Industria e Comercio Ltda and Têxtil Industria e Comercio both make automotive exhaust decouplers. Tecne SA Industria e Comercio manufactures expansion joints and flexible metallic hoses to the petrochemical, mining and general industrial markets.

Property chief denies sale

ALLIED London Properties said there was no truth in speculation that chairman Geoffrey Leigh was trying to sell his 15 per cent stake in the firm. Mr Leigh said: "I wish to make it absolutely clear that I have not, as is alleged, put the company 'up for sale', nor have I appointed Paul Orchard-Lisle of Healey & Baker 'to find a buyer'." A report had said he was attempting to sell his stake through Healey & Baker, the property consultant.

Venture group buys packers

A VENTURE capital consortium of CVC/Cinven has bought the packaging division of Dutch Koninklijke KNP BT for 3.4bn guilders (£1.04bn) in cash. Cinven and CVC said they planned to float the packaging division, which will be renamed Kappa Packaging, on the Amsterdam stock exchange at a later date.

Strong start for Marshalls

MARSHALLS, the building materials group, said it had started 1998 on a strong note with its turnover in the first four months 11 per cent ahead compared with last year. "The outcome for the year is now likely to significantly exceed current market expectations," the company said. The shares closed up 17p, at 156.5p.

Network goes to SDX

SDX Business Systems has bought Network Alchemy for an initial consideration of £2.6m in cash and a deferred consideration of up to 3.27 million SDX shares, subject to performance, over the three year period from February 1998. It said the acquisition was in line with its strategy of extending its addressable market of prospective customers world-wide and focusing on convergent voice and data solutions.

Northern Leisure price slips

SHARES in Northern Leisure, the discotheque and bowling alley group, fell sharply after it said it had terminated takeover talks after no offer for the company was made. The shares closed at 505.5p, a fall of 36p. Northern Leisure had said on 26 March it was in talks which might lead to an offer being made.

COMPANY RESULTS				
	Turnover	Pre-tax	EPS	Dividend
API Group (I)	71.98m (70.00m)	4.809m (6.079m)	12.82p (15.69p)	5.42p (4.33p)
Bell Bros (I)	23.09m (15.95m)	1.508m (1.114m)	7.46p (5.61p)	2.05p (1.90p)
BCC (F)	117.72m (127.68m)	36.51m (36.47m)	36.50p (35.47p)	9.20p (8.00p)
Edinburgh (F)	28.93m (27.84m)	9.53m (9.32m)	31.34p (30.05p)	0.5p (-)
Harrell Group UK (F)	75.0m (60.30m)	7.803m (6.81m)	14.8 (12.4p)	5.55p (2.5p)
Jardine Group (I)	17.88m (14.98m)	0.423m (0.204m)	2.5p (1.3p)	- (-)
Total Group (F)	22.18m (18.83m)	6.000m (2.850m)	17.78p (7.25p)	6.0p (3.0p)

(F) - Profit (I) - Interest 1 EPS is pre-exceptional *Dividend to be paid as a PD

Horrobin quits Scotia in dispute over chief

By Andrew Yates

A SIMMERING boardroom row at Scotia, the drugs group, burst out into the open yesterday when Dr David Horrobin, the company's founder, resigned from his role as non-executive director.

Scotia said Dr Horrobin had stood down following a dispute about the appointment of Dr Robert Dow as chief executive of the group.

Dr Dow replaced Dr Horrobin as head of the group at the start of this year. However tensions between the two men have been running high since then and Dr Horrobin has mounted a campaign among other directors to force Dr Dow out of his post.

The boardroom battle is complicated by the fact that Dr Horrobin was responsible for hiring Dr Dow last September as the company's medical and development director.

Dr Horrobin is understood to have been unhappy at the radical changes Dr Dow has sought to introduce, including cutting down the group's prod-



Dr David Horrobin, founder of Scotia

uct portfolio from 20 drugs to five to concentrate on its cancer treatments. Scotia said in a statement yesterday: "The board believes that it is essential that all directors should support Dr Robert Dow, who was unanimously appointed chief executive on 1 January 1998, his management team and his revised strategy for Scotia."

"Dr Horrobin, who first recommended Dr Dow to Scotia, far from offering his support, sought to convince the board that it should remove Dr Dow

from his position. In the light of the foregoing, the board requested the resignation of Dr Horrobin."

Scotia claims the board remained unanimously behind Dr Dow and his future plans for the group.

Dr Horrobin's departure from the group throws the future of his and his family's 17 per cent stake in Scotia, which is worth almost £51m, into doubt. He has undertaken not to sell a large part of his holding until next year, but could sell 4 million shares immediately.

His departure also comes at an awkward time for Sherri Clarkson, Dr Horrobin's wife. She has already decided to step down as managing director of Scotia's drug discovery division, a position that drew criticism from some analysts who cast doubts about her qualifications for the job. However she is not due to leave the company until the end of June.

The news of Dr Horrobin's departure was met with ambivalence in the City and Scotia's share rose 1p to 387.5p yesterday.

Under Dr Horrobin, Scotia's reputation among analysts had become tarnished after the shares had undergone a roller-coaster ride and fallen from a peak of 808p in 1996.

Dr Horrobin signed an agreement with Scotia when he stood down as chief executive to act as a consultant for the group for £50,000 a year. It was unclear yesterday if he would continue in this role but Scotia said he will not be entitled to any pay-off on stepping down as a non-executive director.

Dr Horrobin will now concentrate on building up his new company Scarista, which has bought an exclusive licence covering all technology related to Scotia's research and development on psychiatry, asthma and central nervous system treatments.

Scotia is the drugs company behind Olibra, the new ingredient used in yoghurts which makes you feel fuller for longer. The yoghurts have already hit UK supermarket shelves and the group has recently teamed up with St Ivel to create a new range of desserts.

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Legal & General



OUTLOOK ON RECORD COMPANIES IN A SPIN: WHERE BRANSON FINDS START-UP CAPITAL: AND HOW VW IS NEAR THE WINNING LINE

Jilted EMI has to prove its worth now

ED BRONFMAN of Seagram seems to be putting it around with the abandon of an ageing rock star in his attempt to find a music company to dally with. First EMI, now PolyGram. If there were anyone else it was possible to flirt with, Mr Bronfman would be in there.

But then again, perhaps it was the other way round. Was it EMI, desperate to be taken over, which like some young groupie approached him? Realising there was an arguably more attractive prize on offer, EMI's advances were brushed aside, and Seagram turned its attentions instead to PolyGram. The spin being applied to events by all parties makes it unlikely we'll ever get to the bottom of what happened.

Whatever the truth, the episode has left EMI looking jilted and just a little foolish. Coming on top of the management upheavals of the last few months, this has given the impression of a company all at sea and in some need of assistance. So what future for EMI now?

In the City it is quite widely believed that the industry is ripe for consolidation and that EMI would inevitably, as the only independently owned company of size, play a pivotal role in any such restructuring. But actually this is the least likely outcome. The big five record companies of EMI, Sony, Time Warner, PolyGram and Bertelsmann, already have about 75 per cent of the market between them.

In this respect, the music industry is quite unlike other businesses gripped by the consolidation bug. For instance, if the world's two biggest pharmaceutical companies were to merge, it would create a

behemoth for sure, but even so the new monster wouldn't have more than 10 per cent of the world market for prescribed drugs. The same is not true for music. Any combination of alternatives within the big five would run into severe regulatory difficulties, particularly in the US.

Obviously there is no such stumbling block for those from outside the industry, or with only a limited presence in it (like Seagram or Disney). The music industry is notoriously badly and under managed. Its poor operating margins are a constant source of amazement to analysts. The reasons for this are many and varied but the most important is the self evident one that many of those who work in it regard it as a life style business. As one seasoned City observer puts it, "there are an awful lot of snouts in the trough" (double meaning intended). It may be possible, then, to extract much better value out of these businesses than they presently yield.

However, EMI is one of the better managed companies in the business, despite the apparent turmoil at the top. Furthermore, there is little evidence that Seagram, or even Disney, could do the job any better. Seagram's recent record, both strategically and in terms of core performance has been at best mixed. Investors have also fallen out of love with Disney. It is not certain either would be doing their shareholders a service by paying the necessary bid premium.

Part of EMI's problem with the City has been that expectations of its value were driven to exaggerated heights. By the same token, though, Sir Colin Southgate, the

chairman is absolutely right to believe a bid at little more than £6 a share undervalues the company. Now that he's been forced, reluctantly, to return to his day job, the pressure is on for him to prove he's right, for it may well be that there's no one either allowed or prepared to bid much more.

How Virgin invests in the future

RICHARD Branson was in New York yesterday for the US launch of Virgin Cola. On this side of the Atlantic, however, the talk, once again, was not about fizzy drinks but whether and if so when he will float his airline, Virgin Atlantic.

To the Bransonologists, those who follow every twist and turn of his complicated business affairs, the two story lines may be related. The Virgin Cola story has gone a bit flat. It is one of those rare phenomena – a product that has not responded to the Virgin brand magic. Virgin has now taken full control of the Cola business and, while it remains a small part of the overall empire, it will continue to consume cash and offer only losses in return for some while yet.

The picture is similar at a number of other Branson joint ventures such as the financial products business Virgin Direct, Virgin Spirits and Virgin Cinemas. The Branson camp retorts that this is only natural in early, start-up years of such ventures.

But the daddy of them all, when it comes to risk and investment, is Virgin Trains. The word is that despite their abysmal reputation, the two franchises – the West Coast

Mainline and Cross Country Trains – are profitable and that Mr Branson will prove the doubters wrong when he successfully floats the business this summer.

Unfortunately, those profits are built on the back of fat subsidies from the taxpayer. From 2002 onwards, Virgin starts to pay an annual rental for the West Coast Line and, by 2012 will have made net payments to the Government of nearly £1bn. In order to make the business pay its way, Virgin will have to double passenger numbers. This is a tall order when the £2bn modernisation of the line will almost certainly mean services deteriorating before they get better.

On top of that, Virgin is introducing tilting trains for both the West Coast and Cross Country franchises at a cost of well over £1bn. Virgin argues that the rental charges will be met out of profits while the rolling stock orders will be off balance sheet since it will merely lease the trains.

Even so, Mr Branson will still require an awful lot of capital to drive the non-travel businesses forward. When he was in a similar fix in 1992 he sold his most profitable business, Virgin Music, to EMI. This time around the cashew could be Virgin Atlantic which, according to the more heroic estimates, could raise as much as £1bn. And anyway, airline floats are all the rage. Just look at Mr Branson's other quoted airline, Virgin Express, which has risen in value by a half since flotation.

No one at Virgin is anxious to talk up the story. For one thing, it might suggest the train flotation is running off the tracks.

But Mr Branson would not be the opportunist he is if he were not seriously tempted by the idea. And, as the Bransonologists know, it would not be the first time Virgin has sold off its past to finance its future.

BMW falls behind in race for Rolls

THE ROLLS-ROYCE takeover saga shifts a gear to Munich today where Bernd Pischetsrieder, the BMW chairman, will tell his annual shareholders' meeting how he intends to see off the rival bidder Volkswagen. Even though VW's bid is a full £90m higher, BMW mysteriously continues to see its offer as the more attractive one. Unless they have a crank shaft loose, not many shareholders in Vickers, Rolls parent company, are likely to share this belief.

Thus far the Bavarian tactics have consisted of a series of spoiling manoeuvres to block the sale to VW. It is threatening to withdraw its engines if Rolls becomes part of the VW stable. And if that does not work, it is relying upon its pals at the aero-engine maker Rolls-Royce PLC to play hard ball over transferring the Rolls-Royce mark and trade name to VW. Neither gambit looks likely to succeed. VW can find a new source of engines and Rolls-Royce will be hard pushed to argue that one giant German car owner is a less suitable home for the marque than another. Mr Pischetsrieder will have to up the ante if he wants a Roller to adorn the next annual report to shareholders.

US telecom firms in \$61 bn deal

By David Osborne
In New York

CONSOLIDATION in the American telephone companies entered a new orbit yesterday following an announcement from SBC Communications that has agreed to acquire Ameritech Corp for about \$61bn (£37bn), making it the biggest merger ever in the industry and the second biggest in all corporate history.

The deal, which is certain to provoke intense scrutiny from regulators in Washington, marks the next phase in the transformation of SBC from one of the seven Baby Bells created after the 1984 break-up of the old AT&T to a domestic telephone powerhouse stretching from Detroit to Los Angeles and Houston.

It will also send seismic ripples through the entire industry. The size of the deal is such that it even eclipses the \$37bn that WorldCom is proposing to pay for MCI Communications, which at one time was destined to fall into British Telecom's hands until that transaction fell to pieces.

More broadly, the price being offered by SBC means this should measure up as the second largest merger ever between corporations after the \$73bn proposed marriage between Citicorp and Travelers Corp that was unveiled just last month.

SBC has established itself as a predator with a voracious appetite. After existing since 1984 as Southwestern Bell, covering states like Texas, Oklahoma and Missouri, it expanded its base exponentially last year with the \$16.5bn purchase of Pacific Telesis, gaining California and Nevada. Earlier this year it also swallowed Connecticut-based Southern New England Telecommunications for \$4.4bn.

With yesterday's announcement, SBC will stand accused of trying to reverse the break-up of the old Bell system to establish a new domestic monopoly. Such criticism was fended

off, however, by Ed Whitacre, the SBC Chairman.

"The Bell system had national monopoly," he insisted. "This merger talks about 12 states, not 50."

However, the new company, to be called SBC, would serve customers in the top 50 US telephone markets. For these reasons, most analysts did not expect the deal to go through smoothly and certainly not in the 12-month window set by Mr Whitacre yesterday. Reflecting a cautious reaction on Wall Street, shares in SBC fell \$2.626 in morning trading. Ameritech, the principal phone company for the Midwest, rose \$3.25 to \$47.125.

The deal may also give pause to champions of telecom deregulation on Capitol Hill in Washington, who surely never foresaw that the rampant consolidation of the last several months, which has also included the combination of Nynex and Bell Atlantic on the East Coast, would turn out to be the principle result.

"I don't think there is any question there will be a firestorm from regulators, consumer groups, long-distance carriers... arguing that the Telecom Act was not intended to put Humpty Dumpty back together again," said Scott Wright, an analyst with Fehnestock & Co in New York.

Pressure will now intensify on the other phone companies to find new partners of their own, including the new AT&T which until now has remained aloof from the marrying frenzy. Criticising SBC's move, AT&T said yesterday the deal "creates no local competition and delivers no consumer benefits".

In an ironic twist, however, AT&T was itself the subject of speculation last year that it was about to get into bed with SBC. Observers predict AT&T will be forced to find an alliance with another of the remaining Baby Bells. An AT&T marriage with the new Bell Atlantic would be the most dramatic of possible combinations.



French economy minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn tips the first euro coins into a container at France's official mint in Pessac near Bordeaux yesterday, making France the first single currency nation to produce the money. Photograph:AFP

Political foes line up to sing the euro's praises

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

A CAMPAIGN to help Britain learn to love the euro was launched yesterday by the European Movement, marking the 25th anniversary of Britain joining the European Union.

Two government ministers – Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, and Lord Simon, the DTI minister responsible for EU affairs – lined up with opposition politicians, the director general of the CBI and the general secretary of the TUC to emphasise the importance of European integration.

Mr Mandelson described the past quarter century as a time "in the main of missed opportunity. We are determined that things are going to be different from now on."

He added: "No one should underestimate the potential of the euro."

One of the many MPs pre-

sent at yesterday's launch said: "The significant thing about this event is that it marks the professionalisation of the pro-Euro campaign."

A report prepared for the European Movement, a pressure group with cross-party support, by Andersen Consulting on the economic gains of a quarter century of EU membership suggested membership of the single currency was the path to greater prosperity.

The 25 years since Britain joined the Common Market – as it was then known – have seen enormous improvements. Not only do many more Britons take foreign holidays, own telephones, TVs and other consumer goods, but the pattern of trade and investment has also tilted decisively towards the Continent.

Lord Simon said: "We have become European through trade. We may not all feel it, but it has become the reality of our lives."

The report showed that the share of British exports to the EU had nearly doubled from around 30 per cent to 60 per cent between 1973 and now. Many of the biggest inward investors in Britain are European companies. UK membership of the EU also explained Britain's attractiveness to overseas investors from the US and Asia.

Vernon Ellis of Andersen Consulting predicted the single currency would boost the member economies. "There is no doubt in my mind that it will act as a powerful lever to improve competitiveness within the euro zone," he said.

A survey the consultancy conducted into business attitudes to the single currency revealed the proportion believing ECU would be good for Britain had risen from 27 per cent to 67 per cent. But Mr Ellis said a clear lead from the Government would generate even greater business enthusiasm.

Fund managers see single currency eclipsing sterling

By Lea Paterson

UK FUND managers believe interest rates have peaked and the economy is slowing, and anticipate a further weakening of sterling, according to a survey published yesterday.

The latest Merrill Lynch/Gallup survey also found UK managers were optimistic about the euro, with 45 per cent expecting it to be the strongest major currency on a year's view.

Trevor Greetham, global strategist at Merrill Lynch said the "messy political compromise" over the presidency of the European Central Bank had made it more fashionable to say the euro would be a weak currency. However, relative

interest rates also played a major part in a currency's strength, he said. "If interest rates in Europe rise in 1999, then the euro could prove stronger than many expect, especially against the pound."

The survey found only 9 per cent of UK managers thought sterling would be the strongest currency over a year's view, down from 30 per cent last month.

Buying and selling patterns of UK fund managers support the view that the economy is slowing down. Fund managers are strong buyers of gilts – which often do well in a slower economy – and have turned net sellers of institutional property for the first time in more than two years. "Fund managers

tend to sell property as the economic cycle turns downwards", commented Merrill Lynch.

Eighty-four per cent of UK fund managers believe sterling will join the single currency, with most expecting entry in 2002 or 2003. However, a significant minority – 33 per cent – believe joining ECU could harm the UK's economic interests.

UK fund managers are extremely pessimistic about prospects for the Asian economies, with UK support for Japanese stocks hitting its lowest level since the Merrill Lynch survey began in 1990. However, Japanese fund managers are increasingly optimistic about their country's economic prospects.

BMW faces pressure to declare its intentions on Rolls-Royce

By Michael Harrison

THE GERMAN car maker BMW will come under pressure at its annual shareholders' meeting today to clarify whether it plans to top Volkswagen's £430m offer for Rolls-Royce Motor Cars after a day of confusion and conflicting reports.

A BMW management board member, Horst Telschick, yesterday denied reports the company was considering increasing its £340m bid. "We won't raise our offer. If we don't get Rolls-Royce, there are other alternatives. We could develop our own

9-Series," he said. Another spokesman for BMW later refused to rule out the possibility of a higher offer. "We cannot confirm we will raise our bid, but we are not ruling it out," said Walter Glogauer.

He was responding to a newspaper report that BMW by no means excludes an "improvement" of the offer, although the company's official line has always been that it has no intention of doing so.

Meanwhile the aero-engine company Rolls-Royce plc, which owns the rights to the Rolls-Royce trademark, said it did not expect to hold any talks with

Volkswagen about allowing the transfer of the name, until after shareholders in Rolls' parent company, Vickers, have voted on the rival offers at an extraordinary meeting on 4 June.

Neither the aero-engine company nor VW would comment on reports that a licence fee of between £40m and £100m would be payable for allowing VW the right to use the name.

Rolls-Royce plc has made no secret of its preference for BMW, with which it already has an aero-engine joint venture. It says a sale to BMW would reunite the Rolls-Royce name.

Outlook, this page

Sumitomo pays £5m to UK regulator

By Andrew Verity

SUMITOMO Corporation, the Japanese trading giant, yesterday agreed to pay the Financial Services Authority, the UK markets regulator £5m in connection with the £1.6bn copper fraud by rogue trader Yasuo Hamanaka.

The payment, compensating for alleged damage to British markets and resolving all outstanding claims against Sumitomo, represents the biggest payment made to the FSA.

Sumitomo, which employed Hamanaka, paid the City's super-regulator £5m to cover its time, effort and expenses in investigating the fraud.

In the US, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission fined Sumitomo \$125m (£77m). Sumitomo expects to set aside \$25m to compensate other interested parties.

Hamanaka confessed in June 1996 to conducting unauthorised trades in copper futures on a huge scale in an effort to corner the market. The illegal trading had gone on for 10 years, during which time he became known as "Mr Five Per Cent" – because of his alleged share of the copper market.

He was charged in Tokyo with forgery and fraud and pleaded guilty. Tokyo District Court has sentenced him to eight years in prison but he has appealed.

The FSA had begun investigating Hamanaka's activities in early 1996. Traders had pointed to a large and unexplained "backwardation" in copper – the cash price was higher than the future price.

Regulators' suspicions were aroused because the cost of storing and funding the copper should push the future price higher than the cash price. Market rumours at the time said the cause was deliberate manipulation of the market.

The FSA alleged that Hamanaka's conduct had damaged the reputation of British markets and claimed it had incurred hefty costs. Sumitomo did not accept the allegations

but has co-operated with investigators.

The American CFTC said it had found that markets were unlawfully manipulated in 1995 and 1996 because of Hamanaka's unauthorised trades. It also said he had carried out the illegal trades through a New York based copper merchant, whom it refused to name.

The FSA is still involved in an international investigation of the copper scandal, which cost Sumitomo \$2.6bn (£1.6bn), in partnership with Japanese and US authorities. British individuals and companies, including traders and market makers in copper, are still being probed. The Serious Fraud Office is

also investigating whether there was a conspiracy to defraud which went wider than Hamanaka.

Martin London, a partner at Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison, lawyers for Sumitomo, said the company itself had been defrauded. "The company will, in the US, UK, Japan and elsewhere, vigorously pursue those who helped Mr Hamanaka defraud Sumitomo," he said.

The FSA said it had received "prompt valuable and extensive co-operation" from Sumitomo since Hamanaka's confession in June 1996.

The £5m settlement is a fraction of the £77m CFTC fine because the FSA has no power to fine companies directly.

US mega merger puts C&W back in the frame

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

YET another huge American telephone merger sent a buzz of excitement surging through the lines at Cable & Wireless. In active trading, the shares rose 33p to 677p as speculation resurfaced about the group's ability to retain its independence.

The transatlantic deal is a \$62bn alliance between SBC Communications and America's second largest telecommer, AT&T. It ranks with Nations-Bank's takeover of BankAmerica as the second largest merger on record, topped only by the \$73bn Citicorp and Travelers group together.

Cable was also helped by its Italian partner, Telecom Italia, planned to cement their trading relationship by buying a 10 per cent stake. Slightly better results from its Cable & Wireless Communications offshoot also helped but it was the deepening suspicion the takeover bell will soon ring which was the major influence.

BT missed the party, falling

6p to 658p. But Vodafone jumped 20p to 690p and Orange 20.5p to 455p. Securicor put on 12.5p to 411.5p as it hopes BT will buy its stake in their Cellnet mobile telephone joint venture.

Footsie jumped 58.5 points to 6,028.3 with the supporting indices again hitting new peaks; New York provided much of the momentum.

Among blue chips, Courtauld, the chemical group, added 23p to 464p as a possible rival offer to the Dutch Akzo Nobel 450p bid was signalled; Rolls-Royce climbed 9.5p to 304.5p as Morgan Stanley lifted its target to 340p and Enterprise Oil, 23p to 556p, and Lasmo, 7p to 271p, strengthened on hopes of North Sea discoveries.

EMI was in a downspin, off 38p (after 49p) on the end of bid talks with Seagram, the Canadian group. Northern Leisure, the disco chain was another where takeover hopes disappeared, falling 35p to 505.5p.

Rank, the leisure group, ended slightly firmer at 385p despite sell advice from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson. The investment house frets the shares could fall to 310p and suggests the dividend may be cut and the group will deliver less than 3 per cent profits growth.

Pearson, the banking and media group, gave up 7p to 938p after confirming long-running speculation it is thinking of buying publisher Simon & Schuster from the Viacom giant for around \$4bn. Renewed bid talks lifted Zeneca 70p to 2,620p.

Asda regained 4.5p to 193.5p after it dismissed weekend reports it was again looking at Safeway, up 27p to 370.75p ahead of figures to tomorrow.

Financials came to life after weeks of indecisiveness. Halifax raised 23.5p to 814.5p and Woolwich 7p to 351p. British Energy fell 14p to 550p on reports it planned to

buy the infamous US power station Three Mile Island.

Thomson, the packaged holidays group, arrived with a suitable splash. The when-issued shares touched 211p (against the top-of-the-range 170p float), closing at 193.5p. Trading was heavy with Seagull putting volume at almost 122 million shares.

Jefferson Smurfit, the

paper and packaging group, gained a further 16p to 240p after its 46.5 per cent owned US offshoot agreed a merger with another American packaging group.

Bids continued on the undercard. Hambro Insurance Services edged ahead 2.5p to 128.5p after controlling shareholder, the soon-to-disappear Hambros, accepted a 132p a share offer from a group called Lindsey Morden.

Delancy Estates shaded 4.5p to 102p as hopes of a bid evaporated, replaced by the possibility of a big acquisition, funded by shares valued at 100p. Chesterfield Properties fell 15.5p to 642.5p on reports would be bidder MEPC had lost interest. MEPC gained 21.5p to 593.5p.

Andrews Sykes improved 152.5p to 1,200p after buying Cox Plant Hire from Transport Development for \$49.6m. Part of the consideration will be met through an \$8.5m open offer.

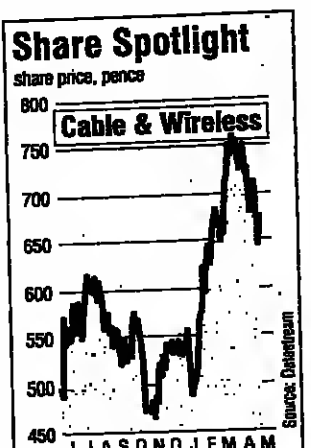
Signet, the jeweller, was activity traded with two delayed trades of 25 and 21 million. US selling was suspected. The price firmed 0.25p to 46.5p.

Emerald Energy, confirming drilling had started at its Gigante 1A well in Colombia, held at 7p. Monument Oil & Gas is earning a 14 per cent interest by meeting up to \$7.3m on the cost.

Householder Fairbairn, five years ago trading along at 4p, gained 11p to 50p after reporting profits up from £3.2m to £5.5m.

Columbus, a publisher, hardened 3.75p to 21.75p. Figures are due soon. Stockbroker Butterfield, which took a shine to the shares when they were 14p in September, expect year's profits, due soon, to emerge at £3.5m against £1.6m.

Burnden Leisure dropped 5p to 17p on the relegation of its trading operation, Bolinn Wanderers.



TAKING STOCK

ACORN Computer, 4p firmer at 140.5p, is contemplating distributing its 25 per cent shareholding in the ARM computer chip maker to its shareholders.

ARM came to market last month. The shares fell 17.5p to 795p; they have closed as high as 870p.

The ARM shares could be worth as much as 120p per Acorn share. Acorn has lost money in its last three full years and was £1.1m in the red in its last interim report.

SUPERFRAME, an engineer, gained 3p to 23p. Expect corporate developments soon. There are suggestions it will buy an engineering group in what will amount to a reverse takeover.

On Friday the company reported profits up from £137,000 to £206,000 and said it traded profitably in the first three months of this year although "the strength of our order book is still not at a level of total comfort".



12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
Alcoholic Beverages								
404 Allied Dmco	70.00	68.00	70.00	70.00	+0.00	4.5	10.0	0.00
405 Allied Dmco	70.00	68.00	70.00	70.00	+0.00	4.5	10.0	0.00
406 Allied Dmco	70.00	68.00	70.00	70.00	+0.00	4.5	10.0	0.00
407 Allied Dmco	70.00	68.00	70.00	70.00	+0.00	4.5	10.0	0.00
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500 Allied Dmco	70.00	68.00	70.00	70.00	+0.00	4.5	10.0	0.00

12	10	PEA Holdings	85.00(0.00)	-	2.1	33.0	
30	1	Racore	25.00(0.00)	-	-	10.0	
31	8	8000	12.50(0.00)	-	-	10.0	
23	4	Roxton	7.00(0.00)-0.50	-	-	-	
53	3	Rossi Corp	4.50(0.00)	-	-	-	
81	61	Ryanco	102.50	-	5.4	67.0	
238	20	Sundstrand Bnd	2.00(0.00)	-	2.4	140	2897.0
239	20	Sundstrand Bnd	20.75(0.00)-0.25	-	6.3	149	0
58	40	Sedgwickore	57.00(0.00)	-	3.7	67.3	0
274	22	Singer	265.50(0.00)-2.00	-	9.4	9.0	
486	36	Time Prod	10.00(0.00)	-	9.2	7.9	
695	30	Trillix	6.00(0.00)	-	2.0	23.9	1986.0
700	30	Trillix Corp	14.00(0.00)-1.00	-	8.6	24.2	0
412	298	UMECO	46.50	-	10	23.1	
174	7	Uni Oxyann Corp	106.00(0.00)-4.50	-	11	22.9	
238	236	Vander (Reg)	726.00(0.00)-20.00	-	10.0	26.7	4657.0
500	503	Walsh	20.00(0.00)-44.00	-	2.6	24.1	3267.0
105	12	Walsh	40.50	-	2.6	23.0	
105	12	Walsh	80.00(0.00)-7.50	-	2.3	25.0	0
140	25	Young (H)	83.50(0.00)	-	2.3	40.9	0

Where to expect a recovery in South-east Asia to start



**HAMISH
McRAE**
ON THE
COUNTRIES
TAKING
THE LEAD

IT AIN'T the going down that matters; it is how quickly you come up afterwards.

The collapse of the East Asian economies is getting worse, not better, but you can begin to glimpse clear distinctions between those countries which are adjusting swiftly and those which are bolting it. So there seems to be a new rule of thumb for analysts, fund managers, or any companies wishing to invest in the region. Don't spend too much time watching the fall because all the countries are in pretty much the same boat; instead, try to identify the scope for recovery, for that is where the real distinctions lie.

The first proposition is easy to demonstrate. Aside from Japan (which is in a rather different position) the two places with the highest GDP per head are Hong Kong and Singapore. They are the most advanced in economic terms. Both assumed that their very different level of economic sophistication would enable them to escape the regional contagion; they were not emerging economies, they had already emerged. Indeed, many people believed that Singapore would benefit from the regional crisis, as investment would hurry there in a flight to quality.

Wrong. Hong Kong has

been hit by a loss of confidence following the Chinese takeover, particularly among the Japanese, which has damaged the tourist trade.

Singapore ought not to have seen a similar collapse, but it has. The result is shown in the graph on the left: domestic demand in both places started to turn down in the middle of last year and now is heading downwards with increasing speed. The figures are not directly comparable, for one is volume, the other value, but the similarity in the pattern is striking. Hong Kong looks like experiencing its first recession since the Second World War. It is perfectly plausible that Singapore will experience recession, too.

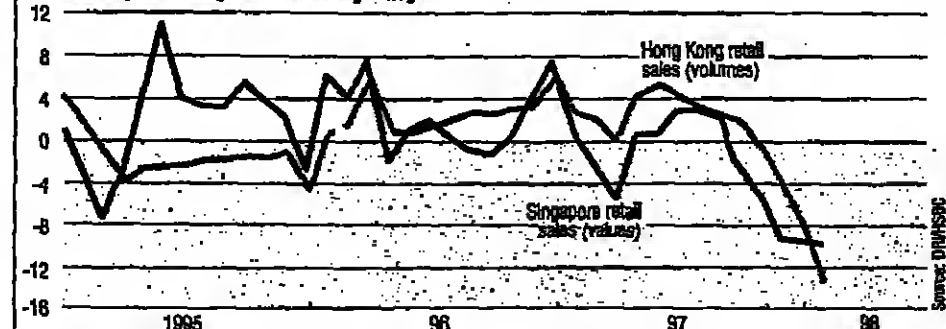
If you look at industrial production (right hand graph) a slightly different picture emerges. Thailand, where the crisis first became evident, has been heading south ever since the middle of last year. But elsewhere there was sufficient momentum to carry production upwards for several months. Output in China seems to have peaked around the turn of the year, and only recently has it begun to fall in any dramatic way.

All this would figure: retail sales will respond very quickly to any change in people's perceived circumstances. If we get scared, we stop buying. But industrial production inevitably lags. More surprising, though, is the fact that Thailand and Korea, the two countries at the bottom of the right hand graph, are now seen as the potential success stories of the region, the ones where recovery will take hold most strongly.

This is certainly the view of the International Monetary Fund, which has been impressed by the vigour with which these two countries have been applying reform programmes. You also pick up this view in the investment banking community. And if you want one modest endorsement of it among hard-boiled business people, well, note that Tesco is expected this week to announce that it will take a stake in

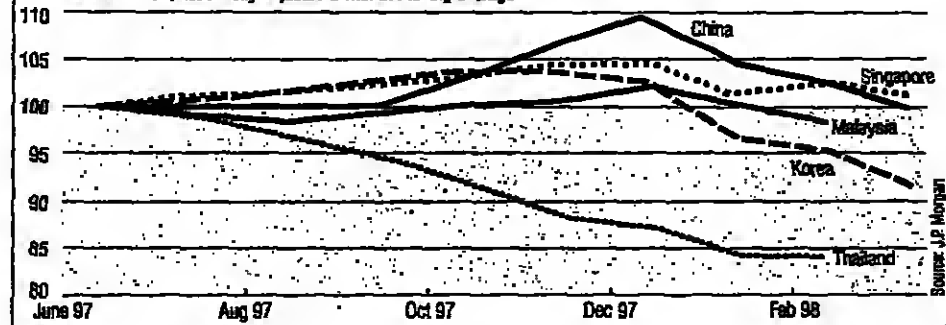
Asian domestic demand collapses...

Year on year % change 3-month moving average



...and industrial production follows

June 97=100, seasonally adjusted 3-month moving average



Thailand's second largest hypermarket operator. Expect, too, foreign participation in the Korean industrial rescues which are now being put in place.

By contrast, Malaysia is not really putting together an integrated reform programme that is attractive to foreign investors, and Indonesia - well, it is very difficult to be anything other than gloomy until political change takes place.

So there is a clearly defined clutch of leaders, with Thailand and Korea in the vanguard, and a tail of laggards, with Indonesia obviously at the back. Hong Kong is a conundrum, for more than ever its future will depend on the attitude of China. Were it still a colony it would react as it has always done in the past: adjust to market pressures with speed and ferocity. But now the market signals may not be allowed to shine through.

At least we do have a clear picture of what is happening in Hong Kong. By contrast, we know very little about what is

happening in mainland China. The last figures are now showing a sharp decline in output, but other numbers being published, most notably the foreign reserves, show no sign of crisis. Eventually, it will be possible to put together a picture and, in particular, make a better judgement on the likelihood of a Chinese devaluation which, if it happens, would change the balance of competitiveness in the entire region. But at the moment we are pretty blind.

Sifting through the available information - partly from published data, partly from first-hand anecdotal reports from people who have just returned - my instinct is to expect a big discontinuity in the Chinese economic policy within the next six to nine months. Something is going to give. That something may just be the exchange rate, or it may be something more. But that is an intuitive judgement based on partial information, rather a thought-through verdict. Meanwhile, expect a modest

recovery of sorts to begin in both Korea and Thailand. It will not be marvellous, and any regional recovery risks being unseated by external events. The most likely of these is a rise in US interest rates, which would probably have occurred by now had the Fed not been concerned at the knock-on effect on the East Asian region. But it will signal the end of the slash-and-burn approach to rating the region: assuming because one country heads south that all the others will too.

As it has turned out that was the right approach to analysis in the downswing, for they did all head down pretty much together. But it will be the wrong one during the upswing, for they will head up at different speeds.

There is a bigger moral here. When there is bad news the best thing to do is panic sell everything and don't try to be clever. When there is good news (as there will, in pockets, be from now on), be discerning: it is a time for applying judgement.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



HANS-JOERG RUDOLFF is back - as chairman of Barclays Capital's executive committee. The legendary former boss of Credit Suisse First Boston has been in semi-retirement for the last couple of years but last December his former colleague, Bob Diamond, persuaded him to return from his Geneva base to take up the investment banking outposts in London.

Mr Diamond, who has been at Barclays Capital for the last two years, the latter year as chief executive, worked at CSFB in 1992, when Mr Rudloff was chairman and chief executive. Mr Rudloff, 57, did for the Eurobond markets in the 1970s and 1980s what Henry Ford did for popular car ownership at the beginning of the century, and his re-emergence at Barclays' investment banking arm is sure to give it much-needed clout since it sold its equities and corporate finance businesses last autumn.

Recent press reports wrongly suggested that Mr Rudloff was destined for Warburg Dillon Read. For the last four years he has been running his own investment bank, MC Securities, which specialised in Eastern Europe and Russia, and which he recently sold to Robert Fleming.

Now Mr Diamond is looking forward to his old boss bringing his well-known, hard-ocred deal making skills to Barclays Capital's target markets: "the integration of the bond and loan markets, the introduction of the euro and the significant potential of emerging markets."

FORGET Eurovision and warbling Israeli transsexuals, the only contest accountants KPMG were interested in last weekend were the municipal elections. Head of press relations, Tim Roberts, was reasonably confident of winning the Tory council of Friern Barnet in London for Labour.

Sadly, our hero failed to "do a Tony," and the north London borough remains True Blue. At least it was a hard fight, I'm told, and not "out points".

THERE was some ripe banter at Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC) yesterday as the company unveiled OK-ish results.

One journalist asked: "What's the highest charge you can pay for your cable TV and telephone?" Greg Clarke, CWC's UK managing director, answered without missing a beat: "I think you can go up to about £45 a month. That means you have to take all the porn channels."

At which point Nicholas Mearns-Smith, the company's finance director, couldn't resist adding: "Which is why Greg knows the exact charge."

To which Mr Clarke in turn rejoined: "Yes, but Nick lives in a CWC franchise area, whereas I don't."

Perhaps CWC should launch a new sports slot: "All-in wrestling direct from the boardroom."

DERMOT Kelly, the director of Skoda UK, is used to defending a brand that is still seen in this country as a standing joke. This lunchtime he faces his toughest test - a grilling from the members of the Saffron Walden Rotary Club. They have booked Mr Kelly to speak as part of a themed motoring day which kicks off with a visit to Woods of Great Eastern, the country's best-known restorer of Rolls-Royce cars.

The two events were booked months ago when the only thing that Skoda and Rolls had in common was four wheels. However, the eagle-eyed rotarians will have spotted that if Volkswagen wins the German battle for Rolls, then the luxury car maker will become part of the same stable as Skoda, which has been owned by VW since 1991. Mr Kelly promises he will not be fazed, whatever questions he is called upon to field.

FRESH from being appointed exclusive caterer to BA's no-frills airline Go, Costa Coffee is branching out into the music business. From this week, most of the Whitbread-owned group's 85-odd outlets will be selling, alongside the lattes and deep-roasted espressos, a compilation CD called *A Putumayo Blend: Music from the Coffee Lands*.

The idea is the brainchild of Dan Storper, chairman and chief executive of Putumayo. Dan got into the in-vogue "world music" through his previous business of selling traditional clothing and artifacts in New York. Travelling to developing countries for his merchandise, Dan found himself getting more and more interested in the local musical styles. Returning home after his trips he would make tapes of the records he had bought and play them in the shop. When customers started asking about the music, he - with classic entrepreneurial flair - spotted another business opportunity.

The heady brew of coffee, ethnic music and books has worked well in the United States, where Putumayo CDs were apparently the first to be sold in the cafes of the huge booksellers Borders and Barnes & Noble, which are just entering the UK market.

And Storper, a cappuccino fiend himself, sees Costa as drawing on coffee houses' original role in the development of institutions like Lloyd's of London and gentlemen's clubs.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	100.00	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Australia	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57
Canada	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57	25.57
Denmark	10.38	10.38	10.38	10.38	10.38	10.38
France	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.55	6.55
Germany	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Greece	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Hong Kong	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.75
India	47.81	47.81	47.81	47.81	47.81	47.81
Italy	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Japan	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Netherlands	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
New Zealand	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Norway	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Portugal	20.48	20.48	20.48	20.48	20.48	20.48
Saudi Arabia	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Singapore	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46
South Africa	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Spain	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Sweden	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93
Switzerland	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93	1.93

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
Argentina	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Brazil	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
China	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
India	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Indonesia	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Japan	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Korea	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Malaysia	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Philippines	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Thailand	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Taiwan	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
Turkey	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07
USA	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07	166.07

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
225%		250%		Prime		Discount	050%
France		Lombard		Discount		Belgium	
330%		Canada		Fed Funds		Discount	273%
Intervention		Prime		450%		Discount	330%
Italy		Prime		10-1 Repurchase		Switzerland	
Discount		500%		Sweden		Discount	100%
Netherlands		Denmark		400%		Lombard	353%
Spain/Fin		330%		Repo(Avg)			

Bond Yields								
Country	3 mth	chg.	1 yr	chg.	3 yr	chg.	10 yr	chg.
Australia	-	-004	047	001	498	001	537	009
Canada	-	-004	038	001	498	001	537	009
France	479	-011	516	009	511	003	532	008
ECU	428	000	428	001	422	-004	470	001
Germany	431	001	431	001	431	001	431	001
Italy	383	-003	398	004	412	-004	464	-022
Japan	531	001	432	009	454	000	487	-002
Netherlands	431	001	431	001	431	001	431	001
Netherlands	398	-005	398	-001	423	-004	458	-003
Spain	482	000	482	000	488	000	470	-008
Sweden	478	000	478	000	478	000	478	000
Switzerland	197	002	198	005	199	003	218	001
UK	685	000	744	005	-	-	-	-
US	485	-	517	-	583	-	588	-

Stewart boosted by season's first points

Motor racing
By Derek Allsop

IT was business as usual in the McLaren-Mercedes camp and the scene reflected that: no excessive celebrations, no gloating, no flaunting. Another one-two had been clinically accomplished, time to pack up and head for the next race.

Evidence of spilling emotions was to be found along the pit-lane, at Stewart-Ford: jubilation, relief, and a discernible sense of vindication. Their was the unscripted triumph of the Spanish Grand Prix.

Jackie Stewart arrived here facing an inquisition and there were those who relished his public discomfiture. Was his team up to it? Was he up to it? Ford were among those doubtless listening for the answers.

But then Rubens Barrichello, the Brazilian driver who delivered the team's only other points, from that remarkable second place at Monaco, a year earlier, produced a little gem of a drive, fending off the world champion, Jacques Villeneuve and his Williams, to bring home

the white car in fifth place. Stewart, three times world champion as a driver, gratefully embraced the two points as if they were his first.

"The last few weeks have been murder," he said. "We needed a good result here and we've got it."

The late completion of this year's car, the laborious move to a new factory, and Jan Magnussen's early poor form combined to intensify the pressure on Stewart.

"It's stressful enough moving home," he said. "Imagine what it's like moving an entire race team. It's been very difficult for us. But for all that I've never had second thoughts about going ahead with this. I've had ups and downs throughout my career."

"I know people were looking for me to fail when I came back into Formula One, but you always get that. It doesn't concern me. They said the same when we set up Paul Stewart Racing 10 years ago and we've run 12 championships and 122 races with that team."

"We also have a good team here. We have the resources and

the facilities. Next month we will have our test team in place and that is something we've obviously needed."

"Success at this level isn't achieved overnight. We can't expect to take on the Ferraris, Benetton and Saubers of this world straight away. We're still finding our feet."

Barrichello's application this season has helped sustain the team's optimism through the trials and tribulations, who almost lost his job a fortnight ago, bought himself a little more time in the car by finishing Sunday's race, albeit a distant 12th.

"The really pleasing thing is that Rubens managed to keep Villeneuve behind him for the whole race," Stewart said. "During the last third of the race, I was incredibly tense."

"It was great that Jan finished. We just have to get his head in shape. We don't want to change him if he can get his act together, and maybe this is the start for him."

Stewart returns to Monte Carlo, on Sunday week, in good heart while others hope the unique nature of the principal-

ity's street circuit will provide him with the opportunity of closing the gap on McLaren.

Mika Hakkinen's success, here, ahead of his team-mate David Coulthard, was as resounding as it was anticipated by most.

Ferrari will have to find significant improvements if Michael Schumacher is to summon any sustained threat to McLaren and force Ron Dennis to concentrate his team's efforts on one of his drivers. Otherwise, Formula One is looking to Coulthard to challenge Hakkinen and make a spectacle of the champion.

Dennis said: "I hope we have the problem of how we will handle which of the two will be going for the world championship, but at this stage that would be too presumptuous."

"They are comfortable with each other. We will not step in with any instructions because it is not necessary as it was at the start of the season."

McLaren have discovered the once elusive reliability to match their performance, and just now that is proving an irresistible formula.



Tiger Woods on the way to the win that made him world No 1 again Photograph: Reuters

Woods claims first victory in 10 months

TIGER WOODS shook off a shaky opening nine holes and held off a steady challenge from Jay Doo Blake to win the Bell South Classic by one stroke on Sunday, ending a 10-month winless drought on the PGA tour.

Woods, who had not won since taking the Western Open

last July, led Blake by three shots entering the final round after setting a new course-record 63 on Saturday. He went on to shoot an even-par 72 and finished off at 271, 17-under-par.

This victory moves Woods back to top spot in the world

golf rankings issued yesterday, overhauling South Africa's Ernie Els who slips down to second place.

The win ended a string of 15 PGA tournaments without a win for Woods, who won six of the first 21 events he entered as a professional.

Smith stuck in sad saga

Sailing
By Stuart Alexander

THE sad saga of Britain's Silk Cut was tinged with a hint of humiliation yesterday as Lawrie Smith dropped further and further back on the eighth leg of the Whitbread race from Annapolis to La Rochelle.

Smith was not alone in his misery as another famous name, John Kostecki, brought up the rear in Chessie Racing, over 200 miles behind the leader, Paul Stanbridge, who has just 1,200 miles to go in Toshiba.

But Smith, in eighth place, was going really slowly, having found a spot in the Atlantic with hardly any wind to push him along. He has been reduced to praying that a forecast new westerly wind will pick him up and help him close the gap over the next 36 hours.

Stanbridge had slightly increased his lead over Grant Dalton in Merit Cup, and these two had a 25-mile cushion on the overall leader and third-placed Paul Cayard in EF Languange.

Third would suit the Californian very nicely as, even though the only man who could attack him, Gunnar Krantz, moved a flu-hit Swedish match up to fifth place, this would leave Cayard with a 127-point advantage over Krantz.

That is more than Krantz could score on the final leg to Southampton so Cayard, whose father is French, should be able to celebrate an overall win in the Volvo Trophy this weekend.

There is, however, still some tricky navigation to complete. "Up ahead is a minefield of light air," said Stanbridge. "It is critical to ride this front as long as possible and try to get on to the back of a stationary low at 15 degrees west which will get us into the Bay of Biscay."

Positions, Digest, page 27

Ireland's tour of S Africa still on hold

Rugby Union

THE FATE of Ireland's forthcoming tour of South Africa remained unclear yesterday despite the resignation of Louis Luyt, the president of the South African Rugby Football Union.

"Our position remains unchanged," said Mvuso Mbebe, the chief executive of the National Sports Council, referring to the controlling sports body's view that all international rugby tours of the country are suspended pending further notice. "We had planned to contact the Irish Rugby Union today, but

now will only do so after we have discussions with the [rugby union] provinces," Mbebe added.

Following Luyt's resignation, the sports minister, Steve Tshwete said all tours to South Africa would go ahead. But the NSC has insisted this will happen only once the entire Sarfu executive committee steps down.

The seven remaining members of the committee - who are all white - could resign en masse today following allegations of nepotism and racism. Four other black members resigned last week in protest at Luyt. A spokesman for Sarfu

said that the remaining seven members "may all resign and be re-elected... It would convince the NSC that everything is being done democratically."

Luyt made his resignation official yesterday by faxing a letter to the union's headquarters. This was greeted by Mbebe as "a step in the right direction".

The toll of professional rugby by union's punishing season will show this morning when England's coach, Clive Woodward, names his southern hemisphere tour squad at Twickenham.

The list of high-profile absences from the 38-man squad for the tour to New Zealand,

Australia and South Africa, is likely to include the England captain, Lawrence Dallaglio, his Lions counterpart, Martin Johnson, the Bath centres, Jeremy Guscott and Phil de Glanville, plus Mike Catt, David Rees, Toby Underwood, Richard Hill and Tim Rodder. Woodward has promised that only players who are "100 per cent mentally and physically fit" should travel.

Several uncapped players, should have a chance to prove themselves. England face Australia on 6 June, New Zealand on 20 and 27 June and should play South Africa on 4 July.

PHILIPS

ECO ONE



Today we publish the updated results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. The league table includes all scores up to MAY 3rd. The player list includes scores from all games played until May 10th. Neither set of scores includes results from the FA Cup. The overall winner at the end of the season will win a pair of tickets to the World Cup finals in France this summer.

Every time one of your players score you get four points. There are four points for a keeper or a defender every time their team keeps a clean sheet. If a player scores the winning goal. i.e. if there is a one goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded 1 bonus point awarded in addition to standard goal related points. Each successful Assist, a pass judged by our experts to lead directly to a goal, will give a player 3 points. The opinion of our experts on the matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point. If a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins. 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in The Independent and repeated the following Sunday in the Independent on Sunday.

HOW TO SCORE	
player scores	4
clean sheet	4
winning goal	1
successful assist	3
yellow card	-1
red card	-3
manager's team wins	3
draw	1

Independent Fantasy Football

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 8 AUGUST -10 MAY

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mr D Edmondson	Edmo United	1133
2	Mr J Hayes	Early Birds	1126
3	Mr Archer	No Wright	1113
3	Mr C King	Seeking Victory	1113
3	Mr P Tuller	Pin Ups 4	1113
3	Mr D Evans	Bootham End Old Boys	1113
3	Mr J Cox	Southville FC	1113
9	Mr A Boyle	Wembley Bounders	1105
9	Mr A Wingrove	Thoy's Boys	1102
9	Mr T Lyons	Diana's Demons	1102
12	Mr M Pawley	Robert's Raiders	1102
13	Mr B Sari	Simply The Best	1098
14	Mr D Sari	The Untouchables	1096
14	Mr D Astoo	Billy's Boys 2nd 11	1092
15	Mr A Choudi	Nikes 9th 11	1092
15	Mr M Ewins	Mikes A Team	1089
15	Mr S Scott	Unbeatable	1089
19	Mr T Brazier	Wow For Short	1087
20	Mr S Scott	The Dream Team	1084
21	Mr M Ewins	I've Started But Will I Finish	1083
21	Mr M Ewins	Mikes A Team	1079
21	Mr A Mitchell	The Eye For It	1079
21	Mr K Boyle	Clogston Rovers	1079
21	Mr G Bell	The Hairy Monsters	1079
26	Mr S Mann	Rebecca Rovers	1079
27	Mr M Ewins	Mikes A Team	1077
28	Mr D Ackroyd	Jack's Lads	1075
29	Miss L Wild	Amerretto FC	1073
30	Mr I Brown	The Howlers	1070
30	Mr D Astuu	Billy's Boys 3rd 11	1069
32	Mr S Scott	Reading	1069
32	Mr N Peat	Tim's Tigers	1068
34	Mr D McCrossan	Washed Up Army	1065
35	Mr D Deper	Quick Start	1064
35	Mr W Barr	Brookes Rangers	1062
37	Mr P Crilland	PDC2	1060
38	Mr A Cunningham	The Zebra	1059
38	Mr A Pringle	Dead Out Rangers	1059
40	Mr R Dunn	Warriors	1058
41	Mr D Baker	Dead Heat	1057
42	Mr G Bell	Stunning Stunts	1056

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15	Mr M Ewins	Mikes A Team	1089
15	Mr S Scott	Un	

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1	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1080
2	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1072
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1064
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1056
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1048
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1040
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1032
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1024
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1016
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1008
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1000
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	992
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	984
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	976
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	968
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	960
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	952
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	944
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	936
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	928
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	920
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	912
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	904
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	896
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	888
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	880
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	872
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	864
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	856
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	848
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	840
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	832
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	824
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	816
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	808
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	800
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	792
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	784
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	776
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	768
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	760
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	752
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	744
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	736
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	728
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	704
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	696
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	688
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	680
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	672
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	656
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	520
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	432
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	360
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	344
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	328
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	320
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	312
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	304
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	296
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	288
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	280
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	272
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	264
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	256
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	248
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	240
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	232
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	224
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	160
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	152
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	144
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	136
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	128
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	120
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	112
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	104
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	96
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	88
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	80
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	72
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	64
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	56
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	48
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	40
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	32
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	24
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	16
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	8
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	0

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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	1024
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	984
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3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	952
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	944
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	936
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	928
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	920
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	912
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	904
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	896
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	888
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	880
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	872
3	Mr J Smith	Edmo United	864
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Survival game beyond newcomers

Promoted one season to the elite; relegated the next. Guy Hodgson looks for the causes of the Premiership's yo-yo syndrome

ON THE way back from Blackburn on Sunday evening the stark difference between inclusion and exclusion from the Premiership was driven home. On one road a bedraggled sign reading "Good luck Bolton" was sadly being taken down while on the M60 a car with Everton scarves draped from the windows had the word "Phew!" in the back window.

Safety and relegation; relief and despair. If you had taken a poll of football supporters a fortnight ago most would have the mooneybags of Everton or Tottenham living in the reduced circumstances of the First Division in preference to Barnsley and Bolton. Some benefit it did them. As Danny Wilson put it succinctly: "All the goodwill in the world will not get you points."

There was local angst on Sunday night, but despair spread beyond the local communities of South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester (or south London in Crystal Palace's case) to everyone who embraces democracy in football. For the three promoted sides of 1996-97 to go straight back to the First Division seemed to emphasise the gap that has grown between the Premiership and the rest.

The City thought so, too, yesterday wiping around a quarter off the value of the shares in Burnden Leisure, the company that owns Bolton. That was not football romanticism speaking but cold, realistic money. Leave the Premiership at the bottom end and you are relegated in tables more pertinent than the ones that read: played, won, drawn and lost.

Look over a longer period and a pattern is emerging. Seven of the 11 teams who have been promoted in the last four seasons have returned to

The numbers game: How the Premiership strugglers spent the season

Everton - stayed up

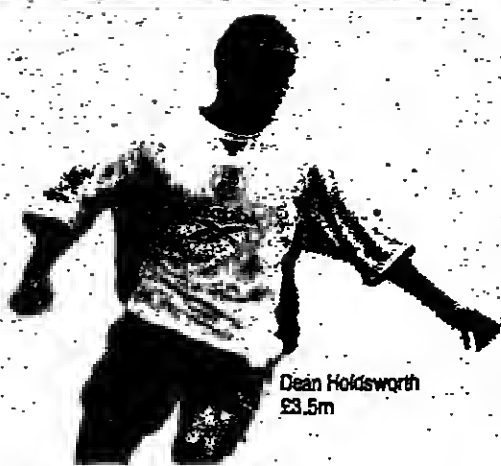


INS:	Walsley	£24,500
Simon Davies	Aston Villa	£700,000
Gareth Farry	Cardiff	£1.5m
Johnathan Williams	Tranmere	£450,000
Tony Thomas	West Ham	£3m
Danny Johnson	Viking Stavanger	£800,000
Thomas Mihay	Sheffield United	£500,000
Carl Williams	Sheffield United	£850,000
Mitch Ward	Derby County	£400,000
Michael Beardsley	Manchester United	£1m
John O'Kane	Sheffield United	£500,000
Donovan	Chester City	£1.5m
Matt McKay	GPR	£1.5m
John Spencer		

OUTS:	Lausanne	£25,000
Malcolm Macdonald	West Ham	£2m
David Unsworth	Sheffield United	£850,000
Grassie	Sheffield Wednesday	£3m
Andy Hinchcliffe	Newcastle United	£5.5m
Gary Spiller	Blackpool	£75,000
John Hills	Sheffield United	Nominal
Joe Egan	Sheffield Wednesday	Free
Earl Barrett	AB Copenhagen	£500,000
Claus Thornsen	Stoke	Free
Neville Southall		

TOTAL INS	TOTAL OUTS	DEFICIT
£15.7m	£11.95m	£3.75m

Bolton - relegated



INS:	Middlesbrough	£1.5m
Nick Cox	Newcastle United	£2.2m
Robbie Elliott	Newcastle United	£450,000
Pat Beardsley	Lazio	£2m
Mark Fish	Leicester City	£580,000
Mike Whitlow	IA of Aranes	£100,000
Arnar Gunnarsson	Wimbledon	£3.5m
Dean Holdsworth	VP6 Finland	£350,000
Jussi Jaaskelainen	Nantes	Free
Gastano Gallenzi	Coventry	Free
John Salska		

OUTS:	Wigan	£300,000
Scott Green	Wigan	£250,000
David Lee	Wolves	£250,000
Witko Pastalinen	Bradford	£625,000
John McGinlay	West Brom	Free
Franz Carr	Southend	Free
Simon Coleman	Bury	Free
Bryan Small	Manchester City	£1m
Jamie Pollock		

TOTAL INS	TOTAL OUTS	DEFICIT
£10.6m	£2.425m	£8.175m

Barnsley - relegated



INS:	Sunderland	£250,000
Lars Leen	Partizan Belgrade	£1.5m
Georgi Hristov	Cardiff	£650,000
Eric Taylor	Bristol City	£750,000
Darren Bernard	Derry	£1.3m
Ashley Ward	Vastars SK	£250,000
Peter Markstedt	Sheffield United	£850,000
Jan Agge Fotof		

OUTS:	Millwall	£250,000
Paul Wilkinson	Oxford	£75,000
Steve Davis		

TOTAL INS	TOTAL OUTS	DEFICIT
£5.35m	£325,000	£5.025m

Crystal Palace - relegated



INS:	Watford	£1.3m
Kevin Miller	IBV Iceland	£350,000
Hermann Hrafnarsson	Bastia	£1.25m
Jamie Pullar	Blackburn	£1.6m
Paul Warhurst	Juventus	£1.2m
Attilio Lombardo	Royal Antwerp	£2m
Itzhak Zohar	Wolves	£2m
Neil Embler	Juventus	£1.7m
Jamie Smith	Brentford	£300,000
Michelle Padovano	Strasbourg	£2.75m
Marcus Bent	Leeds	Free
Valeriy Ismailov	Cardiff	£1m
Tommy Bruhl	Aston Villa	£1m
Matt Jansen		
Sasa Curcic		

OUTS:	Crystal Palace	£300,000
Chris Day	Reading	Free
Ray Houghton	Leeds	£8.25m
David Hopkin	Manchester City	£300,000
Tony Scully	Leyton Orient	£200,000
Jason Harris	Wolves	£300,000
Dougie Freedman	Wolves	£250,000
Kevin Muscat	Swindon	£500,000
George Nkha	Reading	£100,000
Garrett Davies	Millwall	£100,000
Carl Veart	Royal Antwerp	£1m
Itzhak Zohar	Wimbledon	£1.5m
Andy Roberts	Wolves	£300,000
Neil Embler		

TOTAL INS	TOTAL OUTS	DEFICIT
£15.45m	£8.15m	£7.3m

the First Division immediately while another two have also gone down since. Only Derby and Leicester City have survived, the latter at the second attempt, and even they were not without worries last spring.

"The first season is the most important," Colin Todd, the manager of Bolton, said last week. "It makes or breaks the ambitions of a club. Survive that and you have a chance."

So what does it take to endure beyond a first brush with England's elite? The first ingredient, without question, is money. Only Wimbledon have defied the downward pull of

relative poverty over a lengthy period and they have had years of practice. Only an exceptional First Division side could prosper at a more rarefied level.

That is understood; the remedy is less clear. Barnsley spent £5.5m since last summer, Bolton £10.6m and Crystal Palace £15.45m and still they went down. Two of the three teams above them, Newcastle and Everton, have bankrolled their safety to the tune of £50m in the last four seasons.

Which underlines that the system prejudices against promoted teams even if it featherbeds the landing of those

who are jettisoned from the Premiership. Relegated teams get half the television money of those in the top flight in what is known as a "parachute payment". Last year that amounted to £1.5m.

This payment, which last two seasons, automatically gives those teams who drop into the First Division an advantage - it is no coincidence at least two of last year's three relegated clubs will return next season - but the rest of the financial package is loaded against newcomers to the top flight.

Premiership clubs receive £8m a season on average from

television rights while members of the First Division get around £800,000. That is a gigantic imbalance when it comes to buying but also means better players prefer to reap big wages in the reserves of Manchester United, Liverpool et al rather than drop a level. There are not many First Division players these days who would get automatic places with bigger clubs.

Of course, there is a difference in how you spend rather than how much. Leicester's most expensive purchase in their first season in the Premiership was Matt Elliott, a cen-

tre-back, while Derby also built from the back around Igor Stimac. Barnsley learned too late that mistakes which went unpunished in the First Division lead to goals at a higher level and it is dubious whether Palace ever took that on board.

Which, in turn, leads to the man spending the money. Jim Smith and Martin O'Neill have been astute buyers, eschewing one big purchase in favour of spreading their money over a wider area. Smith, in particular, has benefited from foreign players with cheaper price tags. In contrast, numerous Everton managers have shelled out mil-

lions of Peter Johnson's pounds and got very little in return.

But you could be Alex Ferguson with the backing of Old Trafford's riches and get oowhere unless fate smiles on you. Injuries can lay waste to good teams and the market can be a lottery. Even Jim Smith says he is surprised at Paulo Wanchope's impact while Dean Holdsworth looked a 24-carat Premiership striker when Bolton bought him from Wimbledon and managed just three goals. Is that luck or judgement?

Then there is the imponderable, the bad decision. They even themselves out, it is said,

although you would be hard pressed to convince Bolton supporters who remember that Gerry Taggart had a header disallowed in the very first match at the Reebok Stadium even though television evidence showed the ball had crossed the line. The opponents that day were Everton. That "goal" was the thin line between safety and the oblivion of relegation.

Nottigham Forest, Middlesbrough and whoever comes up with them will need a lot of going for them next season but ask a manager what he wants most and he would give you a one-word answer. Luck.



Are golfers mad?

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Bilic blasts Everton's broken promises

By Alan Nixon

THE Everton chairman, Peter Johnson, was accused of breaking promises on major signings last night - by one of his own players.

The unhappy Slaveo Bilic, bought for £4.5m from West Ham, claimed he was told he would be part of a £15m revolution at the club. Now, though, the Croatian international defender has hit out at Johnson for going back on a plan to buy two Italian players, Dino Baggio and Pierluigi Casiraghi.

Bilic said: "I was made promises before I signed, I was told so many things, but I could see straight away it was not like that. I was told by Joe Royle that he was going to buy me, Baggio and Casiraghi. He told me he wanted me to be his leader of the field."

"I could have pulled out of the deal when Joe was sacked," Bilic added, "but the chairman spoke to me and said that even though he [Royle] had gone it was the same story."

Bilic thinks that the failure to close the deals for the Parma midfielder Baggio and the Lazio striker Casiraghi was one of the main reasons the club slumped. He said: "Missing out on those players was not the

only reason for our disappointing season, but maybe with Baggio and Casiraghi we could have been fighting for the championship."

Bilic also attacks the club for selling some of their best players during the season and not replacing them with suitable talent. "We had to do without Gary Speed, Andy Hinchcliffe and Graham Stuart. It's hard to lose that quality from the team," he said. "Why sell the best players from positions we are already short in?"

"It was unbelievable that we did not sign somebody before the transfer deadline. We didn't even make the effort to show people we were trying." Bilic always seemed likely to be on his way this summer, and Howard Kendall left him out of Everton's last game against

Coventry. His words may now have guaranteed his exit.

Newcastle's David Batty faces a possible Football Association misconduct charge, and a possible six-game ban for the start of next season.

Batty is in trouble for apparently pushing the referee, David Elleray, after he was sent off at his former club, Blackburn, on Sunday. Referees are under strict orders to stamp down on players manhandling them, with Arsenal's Emmanuel Petit and West Ham's Steve Lomas singled out this season. Both were given fines and lengthened suspensions.

As Batty's third red card of the season was for violent conduct, that already guarantees him a five-match ban for the opening weeks of next season.

Swedish police on hooligan alert

SWEDISH police are prepared for the worst when Chelsea meet Germany's VfB Stuttgart in the European Cup-winners' Cup final in Stockholm tomorrow.

Up to 1,000 police will be on duty at the Rasunda stadium, the largest police presence at a Swedish sports event since the 1992 European Championships.

Swedish and British police will also be at airports and ports today and tomorrow to spot any known hooligans, who could be refused entry to the country.

"We are ready for the worst. But we also want to create an atmosphere where everything will go well and smoothly," a police spokesman said.

Liverpool's United States international goalkeeper, Brad Friedel, hopes to learn this week if the Government will renew his work permit, allowing him to stay at Anfield.

Friedel has failed to play in 75 per cent of Liverpool's matches - the Government requirement for a permit renewal - since signing from Major League Soccer side Columbus Crew for £1m last December. He is hoping for leniency because the lengthy delay in granting his original work permit meant his acclimatisation in the English game took longer than anticipated.

Friedel's Liverpool colleague, the England midfielder Jamie Redknapp, signed a new five-year contract to stay at Anfield yesterday.

Georgi Kinkladze's £5m transfer from Manchester City to Ajax appears to be on the brink of completion - the Georgian international has already appeared on Dutch television wearing an Ajax shirt and drinking champagne with the directors of the Dutch champions.

Jonathan Hayward has resigned as deputy chairman of Wolverhampton Wanderers. Hayward, Wolves' chairman for five years until 1997, has also given up his seat on the board.

Matthäus out of twilight zone

BERTI VOGTS, Germany's coach, has rescued his former captain Lothar Matthäus from the international wilderness and put him in his World Cup squad - alongside his old rival Jürgen Klinsmann.

Matthäus, Germany's most-capped player with 122 appearances for his country, is the surprise inclusion in Germany's 22-man squad for the finals in France. He last represented his country against Albania on December 18, 1994.

Matthäus was dropped from the German team two years ago, just before Euro 96, and chose at the time to criticise Vogts and to attack Klinsmann for allegedly lobbying to have him removed from the squad. The 37-year-old's international career had appeared to be over, but the long-term absence of

Matthias Sammer left the libero position wide open.

Only last week, Klinsmann - who succeeded Matthäus as Germany's captain - agreed to end their long-running dispute, which dates back to the time they played together for Bayern Munich, for the good of the national side.

The Leeds United striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink has received an unexpected call-up to the Dutch World Cup squad.

The 26-year-old Surinamese-born forward has scored 22 goals in his first season in the Premiership following his £2m move from the Portuguese side Boavista last summer. He said: "Despite my name being mentioned, I hadn't seriously considered this possibility. This is the crowning glory of my career."

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